


BX 4705 .G698 A313 1925
Guibert, 1053-ca. 1124
The autobiography of
Guibert, abbot of Nogent-

Broadway Translations

*“Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.”*

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GUIBERT

ABBOT OF NOGENT-SOUS-COUCY



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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF

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GUIBERT

ABBOT OF NOGENT-SOUS-COUCY

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LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS LTD.

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

I VERY gladly accede to a request to commend this volume to the public, though pressure of work and other serious disabilities have prevented me from revising the proofs as they went through the press, and from taking any but the most occasional part in this version. Mr. Bland's scholarship is, however, a guarantee to readers that they have here an essentially faithful translation of a book which, though its Latinity is sometimes faulty in itself, and more frequently disconcerting to a classical scholar, has often real merits of style, and always great historical value.

Few men so distant from us in time, and so important as representatives of their own age, have let us know so much of themselves and their surroundings as has Guibert de Nogent. Neander, long ago, picked him out as one of the most valuable writers of the twelfth century; and, among others in more recent times, Bernard Monod, the brief-lived son of a very distinguished father, devoted an excellent monograph to *Le Moine Guibert et son temps*. (Hachette, 1905.)

Guibert lived from 1053 to 1124, during a renaissance of thought and civilisation in Europe which is almost comparable to the Renaissance of two centuries and a-half later. And in most ways he was before his time, not only in learning but even more

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in originality. His history of the First Crusade is full of touches taken straight from the lips of men who fought on that expedition, and is informed by a true critical spirit. Still more modern is he in his treatise on Relics—*De Pignoribus Sanctorum*. He hated Jews, he hated heretics ; he wrote a book against Berengar of Tours in defence of transubstantiation ; yet he is almost equally frank in his repudiation of the fabrication of relics which went on wholesale even in the twelfth century, favoured (Guibert tells us) by the timidity of men who knew the truth as well as he did, yet who dared not to speak out against the popular demand. Indeed, it is one of the best testimonials to his frankness and essential love of truth that he confesses to a serious lapse of duty here on his own part, when he was taken by surprise and dared not to repudiate an appeal made to himself in confirmation of a false relic.

The same frankness pervades his Life, here presented for the first time to an English-reading public. St. Augustine had invented a new kind of literature, and one of the most fascinating of all—the autobiography. In the seven centuries that had elapsed since that time, nobody had followed so definitely in this track as our present author, who imitates Augustine also in his frequent digressions and moralisations. The book is therefore among our best and most trustworthy authorities, not only for a good deal of the church history of that time—for Guibert had known many famous churchmen, including our own St. Anselm of Canterbury—but also for home life in castle and monastery, for educational conditions and methods, and for that great municipal movement in France which was already beginning to make struggling peasants into chartered townsfolk.

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On this subject Guibert gives us, from the neighbouring city of Laon, more detailed and vivid information than any other medieval writer ; and his evidence is all the more valuable because he hated this whole " commune " movement with the hatred of an orthodox churchman—" *communio, novum ac pessimum nomen.*" This book is emphatically, in Montaigne's words, *un livre de bonne foy* ; through all the good Abbot's little vanities and occasional prosings, through all his self-accusations before God and his invectives against political or ecclesiastical opponents, we get not only the psychological interest of a real life-portrait, but also a very true picture of a most interesting time and society, no less fascinating in its contrasts with our own age than in its many essential similarities.

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June, 1925.

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

To Thy Majesty, O God, I acknowledge my endless wanderings from Thy paths, my turning back so oft to the bosom of Thy eternal mercy, prompted by Thee in spite of all. The wickedness I did in childhood and in youth, I acknowledge, wickedness that yet springs up in ripened age, my ingrained love of crookedness, that in a body sluggish and worn yet lives on. Whenever I call to mind, O Lord, my persistence in unclean things and in what manner Thou didst vouchsafe remorse for the same, I am amazed at the long-suffering of Thy compassion beyond all that man may conceive. If repentance and a prayerful mind may not be, but by the entrance of Thy Spirit, how dost Thou so graciously suffer these to creep into the hearts of sinners and grant so much favour to those that turn away from Thee, ay, even to those who provoke Thee to wrath? Thou knowest, Great Fatherhood, all too well, how stubbornly we set our hearts against those who incur our anger and how hardly we are appeased towards those that have often given us fierce words or looks.

But Thou art good, ay, goodness itself, and the very fount of goodness. And since Thine aid cometh

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to all in general, shalt Thou not have power also to succour each single being? Why not? When the world lay in ignorance of God, when it was wrapped in darkness and the shadow of death, when, as night went on its course, a universal silence prevailed, by whose merit, by whose cry could Thy Almighty Word be summoned to come forth from Thy royal seat? But since Thou, when all mankind gave no heed to Thee, couldst not even then be turned from pity on them, no wonder that Thou shouldst show Thy compassion on one single sinner, great sinner though he be! 'Tis not for me to say that by men severally Thy pity is more easily won than by men in general, for in either case there is no halting in Thy willingness, because with Thee than willingness itself there can be nothing more willing. Since Thou art the fountain, and since Thou owest to all what flows forth from Thee, manifestly Thou dost not withhold from any, what belongs to all.

Ever therefore sinning, and between sins, ever, returning to Thee, fleeing from truth and traitor to it, when I turn back to goodness, shall goodness destroy itself and, overcome by manifold offences, shall it then become estranged? Is it not said of Thee that in Thy wrath Thou wilt not withhold Thy mercy? The same psalmist sings that this mercy shall abide both now and for ever. Thou knowest that I do not sin because I see that Thou art merciful, but I fearlessly avow that therefore art Thou called merciful, because Thou dost offer pardon to all who seek for it. I do not abuse Thy mercy whenever I am driven to sin by the necessity of sinning; but impious indeed would be the abuse of it, if, because return to Thee after sin is so easy, sin's waywardness should ever give me joy. I sin, 'tis true; but when

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reason returns, I repent that I have yielded to the lust of my heart when my soul, with unwilling heaviness, sinks as on a dunghill for its bed.

But between times, after the sorrow each day of recovery from a fall, what was I to do? Is it not far wiser to climb up in Thee, for a time only, to take breath in Thee even for a moment, than to forget all healing and to despair of grace? And what but despair is it of set purpose to wallow in every sort of shame? For when the spirit no longer strives with the flesh, the very substance of the unhappy soul is squandered away on pleasure. It is as one plunged in stormy waters, swallowed up by the abyss and driven over the mouth of the pit to the heaping up of a reprobate mind.

While therefore, Holy God, my wits, recovering from the drunkenness of my inner being, come back to Thee, although at other times I go not forward, yet at least meanwhile I turn not away from knowledge of myself. For how could I catch even a glimpse of Thee, if my eyes were blind to see myself? Surely, if, as Jeremiah saith, I am a man that hath seen my affliction, it follows that I should shrewdly search for those things by which my want may be supplied. And, contrariwise, if I understand not what is good, how shall I know evil, much less forswear it? If I know not beauty, I shrink not from foulness. Since therefore I am doubly resolved to seek knowledge of Thee through knowledge of myself and enjoying that not to fail in self-knowledge, it is a worthy act and singularly for my soul's good that the darkness of my understanding should be dispersed through these confessions with the searching rays of Thy light cast oftentimes upon it, by which being lastingly illuminated it may for ever know itself.

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CHAPTER II

THE first thing therefore is to acknowledge to Thee the benefits Thou hast conferred on me, that Thy servants, O God, who shall read of them, may exactly weigh the cruelty of my ingratitude. For hadst Thou bestowed on me only what Thou dost allot to other men, wouldst Thou not have exceeded my utmost merit? Besides Thou didst give me many things that redound to Thy praise, but not to mine, and others still of which I must forbear to speak. For if birth, wealth and comeliness of person, to mention no others, are the gifts of Thy hand, O Lord, good men do not value them, except when they are held under the rule of honour by their recipients, or else they are regarded as utterly contemptible by reason of the vice of changefulness that lieth in them. For what have I to do with that which by outward show and unreality gives rise only to lasciviousness or pride? These things are of such neutral nature that according to the quality of the mind, so may they be turned to good or evil and the very pliancy to which they are subject, makes them suspect of inconstancy. Could no other reason be found, this is enough, that no man hath by his own efforts won birth or looks, and of these things in particular all that he hath, was a gift to him.

Other things there be, in the getting of which man's effort may do its part, such as wealth and talents, as Solomon testifies, "When the iron is dull, he must put to the sharpening more strength." Yet even that is confuted by the ready answer that unless the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, be shed on him, and unless Christ shall open

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to him the doors of learning with the key of knowledge, without doubt every teacher shall spend himself in vain on dull ears. Therefore let every wise man be foolish to claim anything as his own but sin.

But leaving these matters let us return to that with which we began. I said, O Good and Holy One, that I thanked Thee for Thy gifts. First and above all, therefore, I render thanks to Thee for that Thou didst bestow on me a mother fair, yet chaste, modest and most devout. Beautiful, indeed, I should in a worldly and foolish fashion have called her, had I not austere declared beauty to be but an empty show. Still, as in the utterly poor their fasting is seen to be of compulsion, since they have no choice as to their food, and are therefore the less praiseworthy, whereas the abstinence of rich men hath value according to their abundance ; so beauty, the more desirable it is, if it harden itself against the temptations of lust, hath the higher title to praise in every sort. If Sallustius Crispus had not thought beauty devoid of morality worthy to be praised, he would never have said of Aurelia Orestilla, " In whom good men never found ought to praise except her beauty." If he declares her fairness by exception to be praised by the good, but that in all else she was foul, I confidently affirm on Sallust's behalf that this was his meaning; as though he had said that she was deservedly approved by God for nature's gift, although it was certainly defiled by added impurities. Therefore we praise beauty in an idol which is justly proportioned, and although, where faith is concerned, an idol is called a thing of naught by the apostle, nor could anything be imagined more profane, yet the true modelling of its members is not unreasonably commended.

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And certainly however fugitive beauty may be, which is liable to change through the instability of the blood, yet within the limits of a shadowy good, it cannot be denied to be good. For if whatever has been eternally established by God, is beautiful, then all that is temporarily fair, is, as it were, the reflection of that eternal beauty, for "The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," says the Apostle. Angels also appearing unto men have always presented countenances of shining beauty. Hence, the wife of Manoah says, "There came a man of God to me having the countenance of an angel." Devils on the contrary, who, according to the First Epistle of Saint Peter are reserved "in a mist of darkness to the day of the great judgment," are wont to appear with looks exceeding foul, save when they deceitfully transfigure themselves into angels of light. And not unjustly so, seeing that they have revolted from the splendour of their noble peers.

Furthermore the bodies of us, the elect, are said to be fashioned like unto the brightness of the body of Christ, so that the vileness that is contracted by accident or natural decay, is amended to the pattern of the Son of God as transfigured on the Mount. If therefore the inner models be fair and good in those who make an outward show, especially when they do not depart from the rule of these, for the same reason that they are beautiful, they are also good. Why, Augustine himself, in his book, if I am not mistaken, "Concerning Christian Doctrine," is known to have said, "He who hath a beautiful body and an ugly soul, is more to be pitied than if he had an ugly body too." If therefore a faulty person is rightly a matter for pity, without any doubt that is a good

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thing which can be spoiled by an admixture of deformity, or improved by the flawlessness of its beauty.

Thanks to Thee therefore, O God, that Thou didst infuse her beauty with virtue ; for the seriousness of her manner was such as to make evident her scorn for all vanity ; her rare speech and her tranquil features gave no encouragement to light looks. Thou knowest, Almighty God, Thou didst put into her in earliest youth the fear of Thy name and into her heart revolt against the allurements of the flesh. Take note that hardly anywhere was she to be found in the company of those who made much of themselves, and as she was temperate herself, so was she sparing in blame of those who were not, and when sometimes a scandalous tale was told by strangers or those of her own household, she would turn away herself and take no part in it and was as much annoyed by such whisperings as if she had been slandered in her own person. God of Truth, Thou knowest it is no private affection, such as one naturally feels for a mother, that prompts me to speak of these things, but the real facts are beyond my power to set forth ; whereas the rest of my race are in truth mere animals ignorant of God, or brutal fighters and murderers, who, unless Thou shouldst with the greatness of Thy wonted mercy pity them, must surely become outcast from Thee. But a better opportunity will occur in this work to speak of her. Let us now turn to my own life.

CHAPTER III

OF this woman most true, as I hope and believe, I was by Thy favour born, the worst of all that she

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begat. In two senses was I her last child, for whereas my brothers and sisters have passed away in good hope of salvation, I alone am left in utter despair. Yet whilst I still live in this evil world, there remaineth to me, through her merit next to Jesus and His Mother and the Saints, the hope of salvation that is open to all. Certainly I know, 'tis wrong to disbelieve, that, as in the world she shewed me greater love and brought me up in greater distinction (with a mother's special affection for her last-born) so surely does she now in the presence of God not forget me. Full was she of God's fire from her youth in Zion, unceasing in her tender care for me sleeping, or awake. And now that she is dead, the wall of her flesh being broken away, I know that in Jerusalem that furnace burns with greater heat than words can express, the more that being filled there with the Spirit of God, she is not ignorant of the miseries in which I am entangled, and, happy though she be, bewails my wanderings, when she sees my feet go astray from the path of goodness marked out by her oft-repeated warnings.

O Father and Lord God, who didst give being to me so bad, in such manner and measure as Thou knowest, from her so truly and really good, Thou didst also grant me hope in her merit, that I should not dare to claim, if I did not now for a little breathe again in Thee after fear of my sins. Likewise Thou didst bring into my wretched heart, perhaps not hope so much as the shadow of hope, in that Thou didst vouchsafe to me birth, and rebirth also, on that day highest of all days and best-beloved by Christian people. Almost the whole of Good Friday had my mother passed in excessive pain of travail, (in what anguish, too, did she linger, when I wandered

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from the way and followed slippery paths!) when at last the eve of Easter dawned.

Racked, therefore, by pains long-endured, and her tortures increasing as her hour drew near, when she thought I had at last in natural course come to the birth, instead I was returned within the womb. By this time my father, friends and kinsfolk were crushed with dismal sorrowing for both of us, for whilst the child was hastening the death of the mother, and she her child's in denying him deliverance, all had reason for compassion. It was a day on which with the exception of the special anniversary service celebrated at its own time the regular offices for the household were not taking place. And so they ask counsel in their need and fly for help to the altar of the Lady Mary, and to her (the only Virgin to bear a child that ever was or would be) this vow was made and in the place of an offering this gift laid upon the Gracious Lady's altar, that should a male child come to the birth, he should be given up to the service of God and of herself in the ministry, but if one of weaker sex, she should be handed over to the corresponding calling. At once was born a weak little being, almost an abortion, and at that timely birth there was rejoicing only for my mother's deliverance, the child being such a miserable object. In that poor mite just born there was such a pitiful meagreness that he had the corpse-like look of one born out of due time; so much so that reeds which grow exceedingly slender in those parts—that being the middle of April—seemed thicker in comparison with my little fingers. On that same day, when I was put into the cleansing water, a certain woman—as I was told in joke when a boy and young man—tossed me from hand to hand saying, "Can such a child live, think

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you, whom nature by a mistake has made almost without limbs, giving him something more like a line than a body ? ”

All these things, my Creator, were signs of the state in which I seem now to live. Could reality in Thy service be found in me, O Lord ? No solidity, no firmness in Thee have I shewn. If to the eye, work of mine has appeared good, many a time have crooked motives made it slight. God of supreme love, I have said Thou gavest me hope, or a faint copy of some little hope, out of the promise of that joyous day on which I was born and reborn and offered too to her who is Queen of all next to God. O Lord God, do I not surmise with the reason Thou hast given me, that the day of birth brings nothing better than the day of death to those that live an unprofitable life ? If it is true beyond dispute that no merits can be prior to the day we are born, but can be to the day of our death : if it should be our hap not to live in goodness, then, I confess, famous days, whether for birth or death, can do us no good.

For if it is true that He made me, and not I myself, and that I did not fix the day, and had no right to the choice of it, its bestowal on me by God affords me neither hope nor honour, unless my life imitating the holiness of the day, justifies its promise. Then certainly my birthday would be brightened by the joyous character of the season, if the purpose of my life were controlled by virtue sighing for integrity, and the glory of the man's entry into the world would appear a favour granted to his merit, if his spirit continuing in righteousness should glorify his end. Whether I be named Peter or Paul, whether Remigius or Nicolaus, I shall not profit, in the words of the poet, “ by the name that has been derived from great

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Iulus," unless I carefully copy the examples of those whom Providence or chance has made my namesakes, Behold, O God, how the swelling of my heart sinks down again, how but a feather's weight is that which is magnified to a matter for pride !

Also, O Lady of Earth and Heaven, next to thine only Son, how happy was the thought of those who placed me under bondage to thee ! How happy, too, had been mine, if in later years I had conformed my heart to that vow's resolve ! Behold, I confess that I was given to be especially thine own, nor do I deny that sacrilegiously and knowingly thou wast robbed of me. Did I not rob thee of myself when I preferred my stinking wilfulness to thy sweet odour ? But although many a time by such a cheat I stole myself away from thee, yet to thee, and through thee to God the Father and thine only Son, did I more fearlessly return, when I contemplated that offering, and when through my sins a thousand times recurring I pined again, then out of thy never-failing compassion security was born again and I was encouraged to hope by the boon of thy ancient mercy. But why that word " ancient " ? So many times have I known, and daily do know, the constancy of thy mercy, so oft have I escaped from the prison of my fall, when thou didst set me free, that on those old matters I would fain keep utter silence, when such a wealth of freedom rules ; and so often as the repetition of sin begets in me a cruel hardening of the heart, then my resort to thee, as by a natural instinct, softens it again : and when, after looking on myself and thinking of my woes, I faint almost in despair, whether I will or no, I feel springing up in my unhappy soul a certainty of recovery in thee. So close to my thought it lieth, that in whatsoever ills I be entangled, thou canst not,

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if I dare to say it, be a defaulter in my need, and on thee in particular shall I lay the due cause of my ruin, if thou hast no regard for him in his perversity, who was taken straight from the womb to thee, and if thou givest him no welcome when he turns to thee again. Since clearly the power is thine at will and the authority of the Son is known to overflow to the mother, from whom may I rather demand salvation than from thee, to whom, as it were, I cry out, "I am thine" by right of the bondage that began at my birth? But of this at another time how gladly will I reason with thee! Let me touch upon other matters.

CHAPTER IV

Now after birth I had hardly learnt to cherish my rattle when Thou, Gracious God, henceforth my Father, didst make me an orphan. For when almost eight months had passed, the father of my flesh died: for that great thanks to Thee, who didst cause that man to depart in a Christian state, who would undoubtedly have endangered, had he lived, the provision Thou hadst made for me. For because my person, and a certain natural quickness for one of such tender age, seemed to fit me for worldly pursuits, no one doubted that when the proper time came for beginning my education he would break the vow which he had made for me. O Gracious Disposer, for the wellbeing of both didst Thou dispose that I should by no means lose instruction in Thy discipline and that he should not break his solemn promise for me.

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And so with great care did the widow, truly Thine, bring me up, and at last choose the day of the festival of the Blessed Gregory for putting me to school. She had heard that that servant of Thine, O Lord, had been eminent for his wonderful understanding and had abounded in extraordinary wisdom. Therefore she strove with bountiful almsgiving to win the good word of Thy Confessor, that he to whom Thou hadst granted understanding, might procure for me a zeal for the pursuit of knowledge. Put, therefore, to my book, I had learnt the alphabet, but hardly yet to join letters into syllables, when my good mother, eager for my instruction, arranged to pass me on to grammar.

There was a little before that time, and in a measure there is still in my time, such a scarcity of grammarians that in the towns hardly anyone, and in the cities very few, could be found, and those who by good hap could be discovered, had but slight knowledge and could not be compared with the itinerant clerks of these days. And so the man in whose charge my mother decided to put me, had begun to learn grammar late in life and was the more unskilled in the art through having imbibed little of it when young. Yet of such sobriety was he, that what he wanted in letters, he made up for in honesty.

My mother, therefore, through chaplains conducting divine service in her house, approached this teacher, who was in charge of the education of a young cousin of mine, being a kinsman of his parents and boarded in their house. He, taking into consideration the woman's earnest request and favourably impressed by her honourable and virtuous character, although afraid to give offence to those kinsmen of mine, was in doubt whether to come into

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her house. Whilst thus undecided, he was persuaded by the following vision :

At night when he was sleeping in his room, where I remember, the whole of the teaching of our town was conducted, the figure of a whiteheaded old man, of very dignified appearance, holding me by the hand, seemed to lead me in by the door of the room. Halting within hearing, whilst the other looked on, he pointed out his bed to me and said, " Go to him, for he will love you very much." And when he, loosing my hand, let me go, I ran to the man and, as I kissed him again and again on the face, he awoke and conceived such an affection for me, that putting aside all hesitation, and shaking off all fear of my kinsfolk, on whom not only he, but all that belonged to him, were dependent, he agreed to go to my mother and live in her house.

Now that same boy, whom he had been educating so far, was handsome and of good birth, but with a dislike for virtuous conduct and unsteady under all instruction, a liar and a thief, as far as his age would allow, so that under an ineffective guardianship he was hardly ever in school, but could be found playing truant almost every day in the vineyards. But my mother's friendly advances being made to him at the moment when the man was tired of the boy's childish folly, and the meaning of the vision fixing still deeper in his heart what he already desired, he gave up his companionship of the boy and left the noble family with whom he was living. This, however, he would not have done with impunity, had not their respect for my mother, as much as her power, protected him.

CHAPTER V

PLACED under him I was taught with such purity and checked with such honesty in the excesses which are wont to spring up in youth, that I was kept well-guarded from the common wolves and never allowed to leave his company, or to eat anywhere than at home, or to accept gifts from anyone without his leave ; in everything I had to shew self-control in word, look or act, so that he seemed to require of me the conduct of a monk rather than a clerk. For whereas others of my age wandered everywhere at will and were unchecked in the indulgence of such inclinations as were natural to their age, I, hedged in with constant restraints, would sit and look on in my clerical chasuble¹ at the troops of players like a beast awaiting sacrifice.

Even on Sundays and Saints' Days I had to submit to the severity of school exercises ; on no day, and hardly at any time, was I allowed to take holiday ; in fact, in every way and at all times I was driven to study. But he, on the other hand, gave himself up solely to my education, being allowed to have no other pupil.

And whilst he was working me so hard, and anyone looking on might suppose my little mind was being exceedingly sharpened by such driving, the hopes of all were being defeated. For he was utterly unskilled in prose and verse composition. Meantime I

¹ *Clericaliter infulatus*.—*Infula* in medieval Latin is used sometimes for a mitre, sometimes for a chasuble. In classical Latin it is the fillet with which the victim for sacrifice was adorned. There is a play on the two meanings of the word. The sense obviously requires the emendation of *peritum* to *periturum*.

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was pelted almost every day with a hail of blows and hard words, whilst he was forcing me to learn what he could not teach.

With him in this fruitless struggle I passed nearly six years, but got no reward worth the expenditure of time. Yet otherwise in all that is supposed to count for good training in the behaviour of a gentleman, he spared no effort for my improvement. Most faithfully and lovingly did he steep me in all that was temperate and pure and outwardly refined. But I clearly perceived that at my expense he had no consideration and restraint in urging me on without intermission and at much pains under show of teaching. For by the strain of undue application, the natural powers of grown men, as well as of boys, are blunted and the hotter the fire of their mental activity in unremitting study, the sooner is the strength of their understanding weakened and chilled by excess and its energy turned to sloth.

It is necessary, therefore, to treat the mind with greater moderation whilst it is still burdened with its bodily covering; for if there is stillness in heaven for half an hour, so that even the gift of contemplation cannot be unresting whilst it goes on, so, too, the intellect, when wrestling with some problem, will not without rest maintain what I may call its obstinacy. Hence we believe that when the mind has been fixed exclusively on one subject, we ought to give it relaxation from its intensity, so that after dealing by alternation with different subjects we may return with renewed energy, as after a holiday, to that one with which our minds are most engaged. In short, let wearied nature at times get refreshment by varying its work. Let us remember that God has not made the world without variety, but in day and night,

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spring and summer, winter and autumn, has delighted us by changes in the seasons. Let everyone, therefore, who has the name of master, see in what manner he may regulate the teaching of boys, and young men too, for we consider that those who have the full vigour of earnestness such as you see in older men, must be treated in the same way.

Now the love that this man had for me was of a savage sort and excessive severity was shewn by him in his unjust floggings ; and yet the great care with which he guarded me was evident in his acts. Clearly I did not deserve to be beaten, for if he had had the skill in teaching which he professed, it is certain that I was, for a boy, well able to grasp anything that he taught correctly. But because his elocution was by no means pleasing and what he strove to express was not at all clear to himself, his talk rolled ineffectively on and on in a commonplace, but by no means obvious, circle, which could not be brought to any conclusion, much less understood. For so uninstructed was he that he retained incorrectly what he had, as I have said before, once badly learnt late in life, and if he let anything slip out (incautiously, as it were), he maintained and defended it with blows, regarding all his own opinions as certainly true ; but I think he would certainly have been spared such folly . . . for before, says the same teacher, a man's nature has absorbed knowledge, he may win greater praise by keeping silence on that he knows not than by telling of what he knows.

Whilst, then, he took cruel vengeance on me for not knowing what he knew not himself, he ought certainly to have considered that it was very wrong to demand from a weak little mind what he had not put into it. For as the words of madmen can with

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difficulty, or not at all, be understood by the sane, so the talk of those who know not, but say that they know, and pass it on to others, will be darkened the more by their own explanation. You will find nothing more difficult than trying to discourse of what you do not understand, which is bewildering to the teacher, but more to the pupil, making both look like blockheads. This I say, O my God, not to put a stigma on such a friend, but for every reader to understand that we should not attempt to teach as a certainty every assertion we make, and that we should not involve others also in the mists of our own conjectures. For it has been my purpose, in consideration of the poorness of my matter, to give it some flavour by reasoning about things, that if the one deserves to be reckoned of little value, the other may be regarded sometimes as worth while.

CHAPTER VI

ALTHOUGH, therefore, he crushed me by such severity, yet in other ways he made it quite plain that he loved me as well as he did himself. With such watchful care did he devote himself to me, with such foresight did he secure my welfare against the spite of others and teach me on what authority I should beware of the dissolute manners of some who paid court to me, and so long did he argue with my mother about the elaborate richness of my dress, that he was regarded as exercising the guardianship not of a master, but of a parent, and not over my body only, but my soul, too. As for me, considering the dull sensibility of my age and my littleness, great was the

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love I conceived for him in response, in spite of the many weals with which he marked my tender skin so that not through fear, as is common in those of my age, but through a sort of love deeply implanted in my heart, I obeyed him in utter forgetfulness of his severity. Certainly this same master and my mother, when they saw me paying to both alike due respect, tried by frequent tests to see whether I should dare to prefer one or the other on a definite issue.

At last, without any intention on the part of either, an opportunity occurred for a test which left no room for doubt. Once I had been beaten in school—the school being no other than the dining-hall in our house, for he had given up the charge of others to take me alone, my mother having wisely required him to do this for a higher emolument and a better position. When, therefore, at a certain hour in the evening, my studies, such as they were, had come to an end, I went to my mother's knees after a more severe beating than I had deserved. And when she, as she was wont, began to ask me repeatedly whether I had been whipped that day, I, not to appear a tell-tale, entirely denied it. Then she, whether I liked it or not, threw off the inner garment which they call a vest or shirt, and saw my little arms blackened and the skin of my back everywhere puffed up with the cuts from the twigs. And being grieved to the heart by the very savage punishment inflicted on my tender body, troubled, agitated and weeping with sorrow, she said: "You shall never become a clerk, nor any more suffer so much to get learning." At that I, looking at her with what reproach I could, replied: "If I had to die on the spot, I would not give up learning my book and becoming a clerk." Now she had promised that if I wished to become a knight, when I reached

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the age for it, she would give me the arms and equipment.

But when I had, with a good deal of scorn, declined all these offers, she, Thy servant, O Lord, accepted this rebuff so gladly, and was made so cheerful by my scorn of her proposal, that she repeated to my master the reply with which I had opposed her. Then both rejoiced that I had such an eager longing to fulfil my father's vow, whilst I, the more quickly to acquire learning, badly as I was taught, did not shirk the church offices, nay, when the hour tempted or there was need, I did not prefer even my meals to such place and occasion. Then indeed it was so : but Thou, O God, knowest how much I afterwards fell away from that zeal, how reluctantly I went to divine services, hardly consenting even when driven to them with blows. Clearly the impulses that constrained me then, were not religious feelings begotten by thoughtfulness, but only a child's eagerness. But after the bloom of youth was gone through conception of wickedness within, rushing on to loss of all shame, then that older zeal entirely faded away. Although for a brief space, my God, good resolve, nay, the semblance of good resolve, seemed to shine forth, it was soon fated to die away overshadowed by the storm-clouds of evil imaginations.

CHAPTER VII

At length my mother tried by every means to get me into a church living. Now the first opportunity for placing me was not only badly, but abominably chosen. A brother of mine, a young knight and a

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citizen of Clermont . . . situated between Compiègne and Beauvais, was waiting for the payment of money by the lord of that town, either a gift or a feudal due. And when he deferred payment, probably through want of ready money, by the advice of some of my kinsmen it was suggested to him that he should give me a canonry, called a prebend, in the church of that place, which, contrary to canon law, was in his gift, and that he should then cease to be troubled for the payment of his debt.

There was at that time a fresh attack being made by the Apostolic See on married priests, followed by an outburst of rage against them by the people who were zealous for the clergy, angrily demanding that they should either be deprived of their benefices or should cease to perform their priestly duties. Thereupon a certain nephew of my father, a man conspicuous for his power and sagacity, but so bestial in his debauchery that he had no respect for any woman's conjugal ties, now violently inveighed against the clergy because of this canon, as if exceptional purity of heart drove him to horror of such practices. A layman himself, he refused to be bound by a layman's laws, their very laxity making his abuse of them more shameful. The marriage net could not hold him; he never allowed himself to be caught in its noose. Being everywhere in the worst odour through such conduct, but protected by the rank which his worldly power gave him, he was never prevented by the reproach of his own unchastity from thundering persistently against the holy orders.

Having found, therefore, a pretext by which I might profit at the expense of a cloistered priest, he begged the lord of Castrum, with whom, as his intimate friend, he had more than sufficient influence,

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to summon me and invest me with that canonry on the ground that the cleric was an absentee and utterly unsuitable for the office. For contrary to all ecclesiastical law and right, he was holding the Abbacy by permission of the Bishop, and not being under rule himself, he demanded obedience to rule from those who were. Because, therefore, at that time not only was cohabitation with wives alleged against clergy of the first three orders and those under rule, but also the purchase of ecclesiastical offices that involved the care of souls, was regarded as an offence, not to mention posts concerned with the internal business of the church, both those who took the part of the cleric who had lost his prebend and many as young as myself, began to raise whispers of simony and excommunication, which had recently become more frequent. Now married priest as he was, although he would not be separated from his wife by the suspension of his office, at least he had given up celebrating mass.

Because, therefore, he treated the divine mysteries as of less importance than his own body, he was rightly caught in that punishment which he thought to escape by the renunciation of the Sacrifice. And so, being stripped of his canonry, because there was no longer anything to restrain him, he now began freely to celebrate mass, whilst keeping his wife. Then a rumour grew that at this service he was daily repeating the excommunication of my mother and her family. My mother, always fearful in religious matters, dreading the punishment of her sins and therefore the giving of offence, thereupon surrendered the prebend which had been wickedly granted, and in the expectation of some cleric's death, bargained with the lord of the castle for another for me. This

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was out of the frying-pan into the fire. For that something should be given in anticipation of another's death is nothing else than a daily incentive to murder.

O Lord my God, thus was I at that time wickedly caught in these hopes, and in no wise occupied with waiting for Thy gifts which I had not yet learned to know. This woman, Thy servant, did not yet understand the hope, the certainty, she ought to have of my sustenance in Thee and had not learnt what benefits had already been won for me from Thee. For because for a little, whilst still in the world, she had thoughts that were of the world, no wonder that those things which she had chosen to get for herself, she sought to obtain for me, believing that I too would desire the things of the world. But when, after perceiving the peril of her own soul, she burdened the many secret places of her heart with sorrow for her past life, then, as though she had said, "That which I am unwilling to do for myself, I will not do for another," she thought it the worst madness to practise for others what she scorned for herself, and what she had ceased to seek for herself, she conceived it a wicked thing to desire for another, if he should be injured by it. Far different is the practice of many, whom we see with a show of poverty casting away their own advantages, but too eager to secure the advancement of others not only of their own family, which is bad enough, but of those unconnected with them, which is worse.

CHAPTER VIII

BUT I should like to go a little more deeply, whenever it occurs to me in speaking of my own times, into the

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condition of religious life and the conversions to it, that I have seen ; and therefore I have taken this church . . . moreover, some other persons also who happen to be examples of this change for good. There are in writers copious allusions to the prevalence of the monastic way of life in ancient times. For to say nothing of foreign parts, it is known that under certain kings of France in various places with different founders the rules of these institutions were practised ; and in some of them there gathered together such an enormous number of men living a pious life that we wonder how the narrow accommodation of these places could hold such crowds. Some of these indeed had special influence through their congestion, several monasteries, in which the zeal of the brotherhood fell away, being noted for their huge size, as at one time was Luxeuil in Gaul, some, too, in Neustria, now called Normandy. But because, as the poet truly says, " To the highest it is denied to stand for long," and, as is still more true, when the world is misled by the reins of iniquity, the love of a holy life grows cold, material prosperity was also, after a time, lost by certain churches : hence when manual labour also was held to be base, there ensued a scarcity of monks.

Therefore in our day in the oldest monasteries, numbers had thinned, although they had an abundance of wealth given in ancient times and they were satisfied with small congregations, in which very few could be found who, through scorn of sin, had rejected the world, but the churches were rather in the hands of those who had been placed in them by the piety of their kinsmen early in life. And these, having little to fear on account of their own sins, as they imagined they had committed none, therefore

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lived within the walls of the convents a life of slackened zeal. They being allotted managements and outside duties in accordance with the needs or wishes of the abbots, were eager enough themselves to accept them but inexperienced in outside freedom from restraint and had easy opportunities for wasting church monies : these being accounted for as expended or as free gifts. And although there was then little care for religion amongst them, yet out of their very rarity monks became still more scarce.

CHAPTER IX

WHILST this was the state of things and hardly anyone of any consequence joined them, a certain Count of the Castle of Breteuil, which is situated between the borders of Amiens and Beauvais came forth to arouse enthusiasm in many others. He was in the prime of life, a man of most pleasing refinement, noteworthy for the nobility of his family and the power it exercised in other towns as well as its own, through the remarkable splendour for which it was conspicuous, and widely renowned for its riches. Set for some time on a pinnacle of pride, at last the man came to his senses and turned to reflect on the wretchedness of the life which he had begun to live in the world. The miserable condition of his soul being perceived, and that he was doing nothing else in the world but destroying and being destroyed, polluting and being polluted, he continually discussed from all sides with those of his companions to whom he imparted his ardent desires, what manner of life he should take up. Now his name was Everard and he was well-known everywhere as amongst the foremost men of France.

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At last he carried out into actual practice the convictions of his long-continued meditations. Without telling those he left behind, but in company with others whom he had induced by his secret persuasions to form a brotherhood and adopt a religious life, he fled to foreign parts to live where his name was utterly unknown. There he employed himself in burning charcoal to pay for his living by hawking it with his friends through the country and the towns. In this way he imagined he had won the greatest riches, the contemplation, that is, of the daughter of the king, all-glorious within. Now I will add another example, the one followed by him.

Theobald, now universally called Saint and renowned for the number of churches dedicated to him, was before that a young noble. In the midst of his military training, conceiving a distaste for arms, he fled, bare-footed, from his friends, to take up the occupation mentioned above, living in this for some time a life of indigence to which he was unaccustomed. Inspired by his example, I say, Everard had resolved to support himself in the same humble occupation.

But because there are no good things, that do not at times give occasion to some wickedness, when he was one day in a village engaged on some business or other, behold there stood before him a man in a scarlet cloak and silken hose¹ that had the soles cut away in a damnable fashion, with hair effeminately parted in front and sweeping the tops of his shoulders looking more like a lover than a traveller. And

¹ *Tibialibus sericis pedulum abscissione damnatis*.—Guibert's rhetoric is sometimes hard to construe exactly, even where there is no confusion of text. Clerical disciplinarians fulminate all through the Middle Ages against what they look upon as immoral novelties of costume.

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when he, in his simplicity, asked him who he was, the other, raising his eyebrows with a sidelong look in a bold fashion, refrained from speaking, but he naturally more curious at his hesitation to speak, pressed him for a reply, and in the end the man, as if overcome by his persistency, at last burst out, "I am Everard of Breteuil, formerly Count, who, as you know, was once a rich man in France, but going into exile, I am now voluntarily doing penance for my sins." So spoke the fine fellow and amazed his questioner at this sudden assumption of the personality that he claimed for his own. Wondering, therefore, at the impudence of so incredible a rascal, and scorning all further talk with his own shadow, as one might call him, he told the tale to his friends, saying, "Be it known unto you, my friends, that this scheme of life may be profitable for us, but to very many others it is fatal, because by what you have heard from my lips you may guess what happens in many other cases. If, therefore, we wish wholly to please God, we ought to avoid what is a stumbling-block to others and even offers an opportunity for false pretence. Let us therefore go to some permanent abode, where, abandoning the name of exile endured for God's sake, we may deprive anyone of the temptation to personate us. After this declaration they changed their plans, setting out for Marmontier, and there taking the habit of the holy order, they served God continually.

We have been told that this Theobald, whilst in the world, was in his love for fine clothing unsurpassed by those richer than himself and he was of such passionate character that it was no easy matter for anyone even to accost him. But afterwards, when he had become a monk, we have seen him shew such

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contempt for his person, that the meanness of his apparel, the humility of his looks and the emaciation of his limbs would have proclaimed him, not a Count, but a country boor. And when he was sent through cities and towns on the Abbot's business, he could never be induced of his own accord to endure even once to set foot in the castles which he had relinquished. What I have related above, he told me himself, since he had a great regard for me when I was quite young, admitted me amongst his blood-relations, and gave me very special tokens of his love and respect.

He had a very courtly habit of getting anyone whom he knew to be an eminent scholar, to write something in prose or verse for his amusement in a little book which he often carried about with him for the purpose ; so that while collecting the maxims of all who had fame in particular studies, he might from these weigh their several opinions. And although he had no capacity for such things himself, yet he would undoubtedly soon apprehend from the opinion of those to whom he showed his notes, who had expressed himself most correctly. Enough now has been said of a man once a noble and far more noble in the good end he made. He, I say, amongst men of our time, shone most in the brilliant example of his conversion.

CHAPTER X

BUT he who made Paul out of Stephen's prayer, spread this example with happier and wider results through another more powerful person. For Simon, the son of Count Ralph, enriched the religion of our time by the renown of a sudden conversion. How

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famous was the power of this Ralph throughout France, the cities which he attacked, the towns which he took and held with wonderful skill, many can testify who survived him and have remembered his deeds. How great he was, may also be gathered from the one fact that he married the mother of King Philip after the death of her husband.

Now the young Simon, on the death of his father, succeeded him as Count, but for a short time only. For the story goes that the following was the cause of his late conversion. His father's remains had been buried in a certain town which had become his by usurpation rather than by inheritance. The son, fearing this might injure his father's soul, proposed to transfer them to the town which was his by right ; when he was disinterred previous to being taken away and was seen naked by the son, he, looking on the wasted body of him who had been his powerful and daring father, fell to meditation on his wretched state. And then he began to despise all the loftiness and the glory that smiled upon himself. And so having conceived this desire, at last with fiery eagerness he gave birth to it, and flying from his country and his friends, passed over the borders of France into Burgundy to the holy Eugendus in the district of Jura.

I have been told that he had been betrothed to a young girl of high rank, who, hearing that her lover had renounced herself and the world, and not enduring to be considered inferior to him, joined the virgin bands that serve God, determined to remain a virgin herself.

Some time after he had become a monk, he returned to France and the purity of his conversation, with the humility of spirit evident in his looks, inspired so many men and women of consequence that dense

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crowds of both sexes gathered to escort him on his way, and everywhere numbers were incited by the example of his fame to a similar resolve, since a great swarm of men of knightly rank was won over by this man's zeal.

CHAPTER XI

BUT because it was fitting that one of the learned should draw after him a crowd of men in holy orders with the same desire, not long ago there was a certain Brun in the city of Rheims, a man of culture in the liberal arts, a teacher of the higher science, who is supposed to have begotten his first impulse to a new life from the following occasion. After the death of the renowned Archbishop Gervase, one Manasseh thrust himself by simony into the rule of that city. He was of noble birth, but had none at all of that tranquillity of temper which is most becoming to a gentleman ; such pride had he conceived from the novelty of his position, that he seemed to be aiming at the imperial pomp of foreign nations, and even the excesses of such pomp. " Of foreign nations," I said, because in the French kings there has always been seen a strong tendency to moderation, so that, although they may not have known the saying of the wise Solomon, yet they carried it out in practice. " They have made thee a Prince," says he ; " Be not uplifted, but be as one of them." Now as he paid much attention to the military class and neglected the clergy, he is reported to have said on one occasion, " The Archbishopric of Rheims would be a good thing, if one had not to sing mass because of it."

When, therefore, all good men were horrified at the

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great wickedness and senseless conduct of this Archbishop, Brun, the best-reputed man at that time in the churches of Gaul, with certain other noble clerks of Rheims, left the city through hatred of the ill-famed Archbishop. Afterwards when he was more than once anathematised by Hugh of Die, the Archbishop of Lyons and papal legate, and when with his band of soldiers he endeavoured to squander the treasures of the church, the nobles, clergy and citizens drove him from his chair, which he had so evilly occupied. Sent into perpetual exile, after joining the Emperor Henry at that time an excommunicated man, and being himself excommunicated, he wandered about here and there, and in the end died outside the Church.

Worthy of mention is something which befell in the city under his wicked rule. Amongst the church furniture which he had shared out with the soldiers, who had been the tools of his tyranny, was a golden cup of considerable value for two reasons, because it was one of great size and in it had been melted, as was said, some tiny portions of the gold offered by the Magi to the Lord. When, therefore, he was for distributing the cup, after it had been cut up into pieces with pincers, amongst those to whom he had given it, and no one was inclined to touch so sacred an object, at last a wicked knight, who was as bad as the giver, dared to lift it and even to grasp it with shameless contempt for the grandeur of the Sacrament. Thereupon turning mad, he never spent the price of his untoward presumption, but forthwith paid the penalty of his rash greed.

But Brun, having left the city, determined also to renounce the world, and shrinking from observation by his friends, went on to the territory of Grenoble. There, on a high and dreadful cliff, approached by a

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path very rarely used, under which there is a deep gorge in a precipitous valley, he chose to dwell and drew up the rules of that order by which his followers live to this day.

And the church there is not far from the foot of the mountain, in a little fold of its sloping side, and in it are thirteen monks having a cloister quite suitable for common use, but not living together in cloister fashion like other orders.

For they all have their own separate cells round the cloister in which they work, sleep and eat. On Sunday they get their food from the cellarer, that is, bread and beans, the latter, their only kind of relish, being cooked by each in his cell. Water they have both for drinking and other purposes from a conduit, which traverses all their cells and flows into each through certain holes in the party walls. They have fish and cheese on Sundays and the chief festivals ; by fish I mean not what they buy, but what they get by the charity of any good people.

Gold, silver, ornaments for the church they get from no one, having none in the place but a silver cup. Moreover, they do not go into the church at the usual hours, as we do, yet at fixed times. Mass, if I am not mistaken, they hear on Sundays and the usual holy days. They hardly ever speak in any place, for when it is necessary to ask for anything, they do so by signs. Their wine, when they drink it, is so diluted that it has no strength and scarcely any taste, being very little better than ordinary water. Their dress is a hair shirt and few other clothes. They are governed by a Prior, the Bishop of Grenoble, a strict monk, discharging the office of Abbot and Controller. Although they submit to every kind of privation, they accumulate a very rich library. The less their

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store of worldly goods, the more do they toil laboriously for that meat which does not perish, but endures for ever .

So carefully, I say, do they guard their poverty, that this very year the Count of Nevers, a most pious and powerful man, after a visit prompted by his devoutness and their spreading reputation, in which he earnestly warned them against worldly greed, returned home, and then, remembering their poverty, whilst forgetting his own admonitions, he sent them some silver vessels, that is, cups and salvers of great value. But he found them by no means forgetful of what he had said ; for as soon as he had made known to them his intentions, they gave him back his own words exactly repeated. “ We,” said they, “ have chosen to keep no money given to us from outside either for our expenses or for church furniture. And if it is spent on neither of these objects, to what end should we accept it ? ”

And so, ashamed of his offering, which gave the lie to his advice, the Count pretended not to see their rebuff and sent instead a large quantity of ox hides and parchment, which he found out would certainly be needed by them.

Now that place is called Chartreux, and in it the soil is very little cultivated by them for corn. But with the fleeces of their sheep, bred by them in great numbers, they are accustomed to buy the produce they need. Moreover at the foot of that mountain there are dwellings sheltering faithful laymen, more than twenty in number, who live under their careful rule. These are so filled with zeal for the life of meditation, which they have adopted, that they never give it up or grow lukewarm, however long their arduous mode of living may last.

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Leaving this place on some occasion or other, this wonderful Brun, after impressing on them by word and deed the principles of which we have spoken, departed either to Apulia or Calabria and there instituted a similar manner of living. There dwelling in great humility and setting in every way an example of piety that shone all round, he was sought out by the Apostolic See for the honour of a bishopric, but, when taken for it, fled. Fearing the world and the loss of that enjoyment of God already savoured by him, in putting from him such an honour, he refused not the spiritual office, but the worldly rank.

These persons, I say, sowed the first seeds of the monastic life. Forthwith flocks of adherents, men and women, people of all ranks gathered to join them. What shall I say of their ages? When little children of ten and eleven thought as old men and mortified their flesh beyond the endurance of such tender years? In those conversions there were the same results as in the martyrs of old time, a more lively faith found in weak and tender bodies than in those who had the vigour of maturity and the power of knowledge.

At a time, therefore, when nowhere but in the oldest monasteries was there room for many of the monks, new structures were begun everywhere, and as they flocked in from all sides, great store of provision was used. And when the means did not exist for building on a large scale, they arranged for the food and shelter of the monks by twos or fours or as many as could be supported. Consequently in manors and towns, cities and garrisons, and even in the very woods and fields, there suddenly appeared swarms of monks spreading in every direction and busily engaged, and places in which had been lairs of wild beasts and caves

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of robbers became known as sites of holy name and saintly habitations.

Therefore, with so many examples around them, the nobles became eager to submit to voluntary poverty, and, scorning their possessions, to give them up to the convents which they entered ; and ever in a pious kind of hunting they strove to capture others to do the same. Moreover, the noble wives of well-known men forsook marriage, and putting from their pious hearts the love of children, bestowed therein their wealth, charging their support upon the churches. But those men or women who could not wholly surrender their property, supported those who had done so, by many a gift from their substance, surrounding churches and altars with abundant and welcome offerings and by such services striving, so far as they might, out of their wealth to equal that manner of living, which they were not able to copy by exact imitation.

And so it came to pass that at this time the convents made great progress through the multitude of gifts and givers, and still more by the wisdom of those who came to this resolve, and of those who aided the inmates of the churches by caring for them in every way ; whereas now through the growing laxity of these times, each day there seems to be a falling away from the flourishing state of that age. For now, sorrowfully be it said, those gifts which their parents made to holy places moved with love for such things, the sons now withdraw entirely, or are for ever demanding fines for their renewal, being utterly degenerate from the goodwill of their sires.

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CHAPTER XII

AFTER these reasonings at length I return to Thee, my God, to speak of the conversion of that good woman, my mother. She, when hardly of marriageable age, was given to my father, a mere youth, by provision of my grandfather. Though her face shewed much intelligence and a natural and becoming gravity was to be seen in the nobility of her features, yet at the very beginning of her childhood she conceived a fear of God's name. For she had learnt to hate sin not by experience, but by a kind of dread from on high, and (as she often told me herself) this had so flooded her mind with the terror of sudden death, that in later times she grieved because she no longer felt in riper years the same stings of righteous fear, as she had in her rude and ignorant youth.

Now it so happened that at the very beginning of that lawful union conjugal intercourse was made ineffective through the bewitchments of certain persons. For it was said that their marriage drew upon them the envy of a step-mother, who, having nieces of great beauty and nobility, was plotting to entangle one of them with my father. Meeting with no success in her designs, she is said to have used magical arts to prevent entirely the consummation of the marriage. His wife's virginity thus remaining intact for three years, during which he endured his great misfortune in silence, at last, driven to it by his kinsfolk, my father was the first to reveal the facts. Imagine how my kinsmen tried hard in every way to bring about a divorce, and their constant pressure upon my father, young and raw, to become a monk, although at that time there was little talk of

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such orders. This, however, was not done for his soul's good, but with the purpose of getting possession of his property. But when their suggestion produced no effect, they began to hound the girl herself, far away as she was from her kinsfolk and harassed by the violence of strangers, into voluntary flight out of sheer exhaustion under their insults, and without waiting for divorce. Meanwhile she endured all this, bearing with calmness the abuse that was aimed at her, and, if out of this rose any strife, pretending ignorance of it. Besides certain rich men perceiving that she was not in fact a wife, began to assail the heart of the young girl; but Thou, O Lord, the builder of inward chastity, didst inspire her with purity stronger than her nature or her youth; Thy grace it was that saved her from burning, though set in the midst of flames, Thy doing that her weak soul was not hurt by the poison of evil talk, and that when enticements from without were added to those impulses common to our human nature, like oil poured upon the flames, yet the young maiden's heart was always under her control and never won from her by any allurements. Are not such things Thy doing, Thine alone, O Lord, who, when she was in the heat of youth and continually engaged in wifely duties, yet for seven whole years didst keep her in such continency that, in the words of a certain wise man, "even report dared not speak lies about her"?

O God, Thou knowest how hard, how almost impossible it would be for women of the present time to keep such chastity as this; whereas there was in those days such modesty, that hardly ever was the good name of a married woman smirched by ill report. Ah! how wretchedly have modesty and honour in

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the state of maidenhood declined from those times to these, and both the reality and the show of a mother's guardianship shrunk to naught ! Therefore coarse mirth is all that may be noted in their manners and naught but jesting heard, with sly winks and ceaseless chatter. Wantonness shews in their gait, only silliness in their behaviour. So much does the extravagance of their dress depart from the old simplicity that in the enlargement of their sleeves, the straitness of their skirts, the distortion of their shoes of Cordovan leather with their curling toes, they seem to proclaim that everywhere shame is a castaway. A lack of lovers to admire her is a woman's crown of woe. On her crowds of thronging suitors rests her claim to nobility and courtly pride. There was of old time, I call God to witness, greater modesty in married men, who would have blushed to be seen in the company of such women, than there is now in married women ; and men by such shameful conduct are emboldened in their amours abroad and driven to haunt the market-place and the public street.

To what end all this, Lord God, but that no one blushes for his own levity and licentiousness, because he knows that all are tarred with the same brush, and seeing himself in the same case as all others, why, prithee, should he be ashamed of pursuits in which he knows all others engage ? But why do I say " ashamed " when such men only feel shame if they are not conspicuous in their example of lustfulness. nor is a man's private boastfulness about the number of his loves or his choice of the beauty which he prefers, any reproach to him, nor is he scorned for vaunting his love affairs. Rather does his part in furthering the general corruption meet with the approval of all. Listen to the cheers when, with

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the inherent looseness of his unbridled passions, that deserve the doom of eternal silence, he shamelessly bruits abroad what ought to have been hidden in shame, what should have burdened his soul with the guilt of ruined chastity and plunged him in the depths of despair. In this and in like manner is this age corrupt and corrupting, bespattering men with its evil imaginations, whilst the filth thereof, spreading to others, goes on increasing without end.

Holy God, scarcely any such thing was heard of in the time when Thine handmaid was thus living ; nay, shameful things were hidden under the cloak of sacred modesty and things of honour had their crown. In these seven years, O Lord, that virginity that Thou didst in wondrous fashion prolong in her, was in agony under countless wrongs, as frequently they threatened to dissolve her marriage with my father and give her to another husband or to send her away to the strange houses of my distant kin. She did indeed under such churlishness suffer bitterly (at times), but yet against the enticements of her own flesh and the temptations of all others, she strove with wonderful self-control through Thy goodness, O God.

I do not say, gracious Lord, by what virtue she did this, but that the virtue was Thine alone. For how could that be virtue that came of no conflict between body and spirit, no straining after God, but from mere concern for outward honour and avoidance of ill-fame. No doubt shamefacedness has its use, if for naught else, to resist the approach of sin. Useful before sin it may be, yet when sin is done, 'tis only blameworthy. For in that it prostrates the soul with holy shame, holding it back from the sinful deed, for the time it avails, until the fear of God brings aid, seasoning with holy gall shame's lack of

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savour and making that which was profitable for time, that is in the world, to have its use not for a moment, but eternally. Such shamefacedness, lauded of men, yet is the more deadly through its obstinate resistance after sinning to the healing of holy confession. The passionate desire of my mother, Thy servant, O Lord God, was to do nothing to hurt her worldly honour, yet, in the words of Thy Gregory, which she had never read or heard read, she remained not in that desire, for afterwards she surrendered all desire into Thy sole keeping. Therefore was it good for her at that time to be subject to worldly shame.

When therefore that bewitchment by which the bond of natural and lawful union was broken, had lasted seven years and more, it is easy enough to believe that, as by juggling, the faculty of sight may be deceived, so that out of nothing something may be produced by conjurors, and out of certain things others, so reproductive power and effort may be broken up by much less art ; and indeed it is now a common practice understood even by ignorant people. When, therefore, that bewitchment was brought to naught with the aid of a certain old woman, my mother submitted to the duties of a wife as faithfully as she had kept her virginity when assailed by so many reproaches. Happy as she was in all else, she laid herself open to the chance, if not the certainty, of endless misery when she, whose goodness was ever growing, begat a son never else than wicked, worse sinner than myself. Yet Thou knowest, Almighty One, with what purity and holiness in obedience to Thee was my upbringing, what care of nurses in infancy, of masters and teachers in boyhood, she gave me, with no lack even of fine clothes for my little body, putting me on an honourable equality

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with sons of princes and nobles. And not only in my mother, O Lord, didst Thou put this love for me, but didst inspire with it other far richer persons, so that rather through the affection they had for me than under the obligations of kinship, they lavished on me careful tending and nurture.

O God, Thou knowest what warnings, what prayers she daily poured into my ears not to listen to corrupting words from anyone. She taught me, as often as she had leisure from household cares, how and for what I should pray to Thee. Thou alone knowest with what pains she travailed that the sound beginning of a happy and honourable childhood guarded by Thee, might not be ruined by an unsound heart. Thou didst make it her desire that I should without ceasing burn with zeal for Thee, that Thou to my outward comeliness might above all add goodness and wisdom. And Gracious God, Gracious Lord, if then she had foreknown under what heaps of filth I should blot out the fair surface of Thy gifts bestowed by Thee at her prayer, what would she have said? What would she have done? How hopeless the lamentations she would have given forth! How quickly would she have come to torture of heart! Thanks to Thee, sweet over-ruling Disposer, "Who didst mould our hearts like wax." Verily had her clear vision pierced the secret places of my heart, unworthy of her pure gaze, I wonder if she would not there and then have died.

CHAPTER XIII

THIS being said by way of anticipation, let us return to what we left farther back. This woman, I say,

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whilst serving the world, had, I have been told, such fear of God's name that in her obedience to the Church, in almsgiving, in her offerings for masses, her conduct was such as to win respect from all. Full belief in my story will, I know, be made difficult by a natural suspicion that the partiality of a son has exaggerated her virtues. If to praise one's mother be thought a cautious disingenuous way of glorifying one's self, I dare to call Thee to witness, O God, who knowest her soul, in which Thou didst dwell, that I have truthfully asserted her surpassing merit. And indeed, since it is clearer than daylight that my life strayed from the paths of the good, that my pursuits were ever a shame to the wise, of what avail to me will be the greatness of my forebears, when all their grandeur is abridged by their wretched offspring? And I who by no control of will or act make their great qualities live again, am riding post-haste to infamy if I claim their glory for myself.

Now whilst the young girl was still living a married life, something befell which gave no slight impulse to the amendment of her life. The French in the time of King Henry were fighting with much bitterness against the Normans and their Count William, who afterwards conquered England and Scotland, and in that clash of the two nations it was my father's fate to be taken prisoner. It was the custom of this Count never to hold his prisoners to ransom, but to condemn them to life-long captivity. The news being brought to his wife before I was born, though not much before, and therefore I do not call her mother, she abstained from food and drink, and sleep was still more impossible through her despairing anxiety, the cause of this being not the amount of his ransom, but the impossibility of his release.

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In the dead of that night, as, full of deep anxiety, she lay in her bed, since it is the habit of the Devil to invade souls weakened with grief, suddenly whilst she lay awake, the Enemy himself rushed upon her and by the burden of his oppression almost crushed the life out of her. As she choked in agony of spirit and lost all use of her limbs, being unable to make a single sound, having only her reason free, in utter silence she awaited aid from God alone. Then behold, from the head of her bed, a spirit, no doubt a good one, began to cry out in loud and kindly tones, "Holy Mary, help her." And after some words which she fully understood, keeping her senses, although so grievously harassed, he broke out into angry rebuke. Thereupon he who lay upon her, rose up, and the other met and seized him and in the strength of God, with a great crash, overthrew him, so that the room shook heavily with the shock of it, and the maid-servants, fast asleep, were rudely awakened. Now when he had thus been driven out by the power of God, that good spirit, who had called upon Mary and routed the Devil, turning to her whom he had rescued, said, "Take care to be a godly woman." But the attendants, alarmed by the sudden uproar, rose to see how their mistress did, and found her half-dead, with bloodless face and all the strength of her body beaten down; they questioned her about the noise and thereupon were told the causes of it, and hardly were they able by their presence and talk and by the lighting of a lamp to revive her.

Those last words of her deliverer—nay, Thy words, O Lord God, through the mouth of Thy messenger—were stored up for ever in my mother's memory and kept to be carried out with much effect, when the opportunity came. Now after the death of my father,

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although the beauty of her face and form remained undimmed, and I, scarce half a year old, was enough cause for anxiety, she resolved to continue in her widowhood. With what spirit she ruled herself, what an example of modesty she set, may be gathered from the following instance. When my kinsmen, eager for my father's privileges and possessions, strove to take them by the exclusion of my mother, they fixed a day for advancing their claims. The day came and the nobles were in council prepared to act in despite of all justice. My mother, being assured of their greedy intentions, had retired to the church and was repeating her regular prayers before the image of the crucified Lord. One of my father's kinsmen, having the same views as the others and instructed by them, came to request her presence to hear their decision, as they were waiting for her. Whereupon she said, "I will do nothing in the matter but in the presence of my Lord." "Whose lord?" said he. Then, stretching out her hand towards the image of the crucified Lord, she replied, "This is my Lord, this is the advocate through whom I will plead." At that saying the man reddened and, not being very subtle, put on a wry smile to hide his evil intent and went off to tell his friends what he had heard. And they too, being covered with confusion at such an answer, and knowing they had no just occasion against her utter honesty, ceased to trouble her.

Soon one of the chief men of that place and province, a nephew of my father, as greedy as he was powerful, attacked the woman in the following terms: "Since, mistress," said he, "you have sufficient youth and beauty, it is meet that you should marry, that your life in the world may be more

pleasant ; and the children of my uncle should be placed under my care to be trustily brought up by me, his possessions finally coming into my hands, as is right they should." " But," said she, " you know that your uncle was of very noble descent, and since God has taken him away, Hymen shall not repeat his rites over me, unless a marriage with some much greater noble shall offer." Now with craft did the woman speak of getting for husband a greater noble, knowing that could hardly, if at all, come to pass, so that, as he misliked talk of a higher noble, she, who was wholly set against noble and mean alike, might forthwith put an end to all hope of a second marriage. And he setting down to overmuch pride her talk of a greater noble, she rejoined, " Certainly a greater noble, or none at all." He perceiving the resolution with which the lady spoke, desisted from his designs, and never again required of her anything of the kind.

In much fear of God, then, and with like love of all her kin and, most of all, the poor, this woman wisely ruled us and ours and that loyalty which she had given her husband in his lifetime, she kept unbroken and with double constancy to his spirit, with no loosening of the ancient union of their bodies by substitution of other flesh on his departure, almost every day striving to relieve him by the offering of the life-bringing sacrifice. Friendly to all the poor in general, to some in her abounding pity she was generous and bountiful to the full extent of her means. The sting of remembering her sins could not have been sharper if she had been given up to all kinds of wickedness, and if she had dreaded the punishment of every ill deed that is done. In plainness of living there was nothing that she could do, for her delicacy and sumptuous rearing did not admit of a meagre diet. In

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other matters no one knew what self-denial she practised. With these eyes I have seen and made certain by touch that whereas over all she wore garments of rich material, next to her skin she was covered with the roughest hair-cloth, which she wore not merely in the daytime, but, what was a great hardship for a delicate body, she even slept in it at night.

The night offices she hardly ever missed, being as regular at the services attended by all God's people in holy seasons ; in such fashion that scarcely ever in her house was there rest from the singing of God's praises by her chaplains, who were always busy at their office.

So constantly was her dead husband's name on her lips, that in prayer, in almsgiving, in the midst of ordinary business, she continually spoke of him, because he was for ever in her mind. For with love of whom the heart is full, to his name shapeth the tongue in speech, whether it will or no.

CHAPTER XIV

BUT passing by these matters, in which she shewed her goodness, but not her most admirable qualities, let us proceed with what is left. About twelve years after my father's death, I am told, during which the widow managed house and children under worldly garb, she now made haste to bring to happy birth a resolve with which she had long been in labour. Whilst therefore she still pondered this purpose, discussing it with no one but my master and teacher mentioned before, a certain devil-possessed dependant,

I have been told, amongst ramblings on other matters, under the devil's influence, shouted out these words, "The priests have placed a cross in her loins." Nothing indeed could have been truer, although I did not then understand the meaning of his riddle. For thereafter she submitted not to one but to many crosses. Soon afterwards whilst her intention was still unknown to any one but the person I have mentioned, a sort of steward in her house, who himself a little later followed her in her conversion by renunciation of the world, the following vision was seen by her in a dream, to wit, she seemed to be marrying a man and celebrating her nuptials much to the amazement of her children, friends and kinsfolk. The next day when my mother went into the country for a walk attended by my teacher, who was also her steward, she told him of her vision. My mother was in no need of a skilled interpreter in such matters. One look at my master's face and without speech from him she knew that the vision pointed to the subject of many conversations, even to her longing to be united with God. Hastening on her plans therefore and overcome by the burning zeal within her, she withdrew from all part in the society of the town.

At the time of this withdrawal she stayed at a certain manor belonging to the Bishop Guy by his permission. This Guy was a man of courtly manner and noble birth, in person well-fitted for the office he held. He, after conferring notable benefits on the church of Beauvais, such as laying the first stone of a church for regular canons dedicated to St. Quintin, was charged before Hugh, Archbishop of Rheims, with simony and other crimes by those who owed their training and advancement to him. Because he

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did not appear when summoned, judgment went against him by default, and being at Cluny and afraid of the sentence pronounced, he retired into the monastery there. As this man shewed a warm regard for my mother and her family and most of all a special affection for myself, as one who had received the blessing from him at every sacrament but that of the priesthood, when asked by my mother's friends to allow her to live for a while in his own house adjoining the church of that place, he gladly consented. Now this manor, named Chataigneray was about two miles distant from our town.

Whilst staying there she resolved to retire to the convent of Ely. Having therefore built a little house near the church through the agency of my master, at last she came forth from the place where she was staying, and knowing that I should be utterly an orphan with no one on whom to depend—for great as was my wealth of kinsfolk and connections, yet there was none to give me the loving care a little child needs at such an age, for with no lack of food and clothing I suffered from the loss of all those precautions for the helplessness of tender years that only a woman can provide—knowing I say, that I should be exposed to such want of care, yet the love and fear of God hardened her heart, but in her journey to this convent having to pass through the town in which I was living, the sight of the castle gave intolerable anguish to her lacerated heart stung with the bitter remembrance of what she had left behind. No wonder indeed if she felt, as it were, the very limbs of her body torn from her, calling herself, no doubt, 'cruel and unnatural mother,' ay, and hearing herself so called, for shutting out from her heart a child so worthy of her love, and leaving me helpless

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and unprotected, for not only my own people but others too shewed great affection for me. And Thou, Good and Gracious God, didst in Thy sweetness and love harden that heart, the tenderest in all the world, that it might not be tender to her own soul's harm. Tenderness then was ruin of herself, had she, neglecting her God, in worldly care for me put me before her own salvation. But her love was strong as death, for the closer her love for Thee, the greater her composure in breaking from those she loved before.

Coming therefore to that convent she found an old woman in the habit of a nun, whom she compelled to live with her, having declared she would submit to her discipline, as she had all the appearance of great piety. "Compelled," I say, because she exerted all her powers of persuasion, when she knew her character, to get her companionship. And so she began gradually to copy the severity of the older woman, to imitate her meagre diet, to choose the plainest food, to give up the soft cushions in her bed, to which she had been accustomed, to sleep in contentment on corn-straw covered with a little linen sheet. And since she still had much beauty and shewed no sign of age, she purposely strove to assume the appearance of age with an old woman's wrinkles and bowed form. Therefore her long flowing locks, which above all things make a woman beautiful, were frequently cut short with the scissors, her dress was black and unpleasing with its excessive width adorned with countless patches, her cloak of natural colour and her shoes pierced with many a hole past mending, since there was one within her whom she tried to please with such mean apparel.

Since, therefore, she had learnt the beginnings of goodness, by confession, almost daily renewed, her

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mind was for ever occupied in searching out her past deeds, what as a maiden of tender years, what in her married life, what as a widow with a wider range of activities she had done or thought or said, ever examining the seat of reason and bringing what she found to the knowledge of a priest and to God through him. Then you might have seen the woman praying with such sharp sighs, wearing herself with such anguish of spirit that, as she worshipped, there was scarcely ever a pause in the heartrending sobs that went with her entreaties. The seven penitential psalms she had learnt under that aforesaid old woman, not by sight, but by ear, and day and night did she turn them over in her mind, chewing the cud of their relish, one might say, so that never did that singer, chanting most sweetly, ever cease from sighs and groans in Thy ear, O Lord. But whenever meeting with people from outside disturbed the solitude which she loved—for all who were acquainted with her, especially men and women of rank, took pleasure in conversing with her because of her wondrous wit and modesty—on their departure, every untrue, idle or careless word, that was spoken during their talk, begat in her soul indescribable anguish until she reached the customary waters of penitence or confession.

But whatsoever zeal, whatsoever anxiety she shewed in such matters, she could win for her soul no confidence, no certainty of salvation to stay her unceasing lamentations, her earnest and tearful questionings whether she could ever earn pardon for her offences. Thou knowest, O Lord, and I too am not ignorant, what sins were hers. How small was their whole sum compared with those of others who neither sorrow nor sigh. Thou knowest, O Lord, how hereby may be measured the state of her soul,

that never did I see her heart grow cold in the fear of punishment and in her love for Thee.

CHAPTER XV

WHY say more? Whilst she, as I have described, was thus divorcing herself from the world, I was left deserted by mother, guide and master. For he who had so faithfully trained and taught me, fired by my mother's example, love and counsel, betook himself to the monastery of Ely. And I, now possessed of a baneful liberty, began most immoderately to abuse my power, to laugh at churches, to hate school, to love the company of my young lay cousins devoted to knightly pursuits, and, whilst cursing the clerk's garb, to promise remission of sins, to indulge in sleep in which formerly I was allowed little relaxation, so that by unaccustomed excess of it my body began to waste. Meantime the agitating news of my doings fell on my mother's ears, and surmising from what she heard, my immediate ruin, she was half-dead with fear. For the fine clothing which I had in the church processions, provided by her in the hope that I might be the more eager for the clerk's life, I wore everywhere in wanton pursuits unnatural at my age, rivalling the boldness of older youths, utterly careless and intemperate.

Whilst therefore the looseness, ay, the madness of my behaviour was all the worse, because I had lived before a strict and guarded life, my mother, unable to endure what she heard, had recourse to the Abbot and begged him and the brotherhood that my master might be allowed to resume my training. The

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Abbot, brought up by my grandfather and under obligation for benefits received from his house, gave me a ready welcome, when I went to him, and followed up his kind reception with still kinder treatment thereafter. I call Thee to witness, Holy God and Disposer, that from the moment I entered the monastery church and so soon as I saw the monks sitting there, at that sight a longing for the monk's life seized me, which never grew cold, and my spirit had no rest until its desire was fulfilled. And so living with them in the same cloister and thinking on their whole existence and condition, as the flame increases when fanned by the wind, so by contemplation of them my soul yearning to be made like unto them, could not but be on fire. Lastly I was urged by the Abbot of the place by entreaties daily repeated to become a monk there, and although I passionately desired so to do, yet could not my tongue be loosed by the prayer of those who desired me to make such a promise and what would be most difficult now that I am older, to be silent with a full heart, yet boy as I was, that silence I kept without much difficulty.

At length I opened the matter to my mother, and she fearing the instability of boyhood, tried by reasoning to dissuade me from my purpose, which made me not a little sorry I had revealed my intention ; and when I also told my master, he opposed it still more. Deeply annoyed at the opposition of both, I determined to turn my mind elsewhere ; and so I began to act as if I had never had such a desire. Having put the matter off from the week of Pentecost until Christmas day, and being both eager and anxious to bring the matter to an end, I impatiently threw off my respect for my mother and my fear

of my master, and betaking myself to the Abbot, who was eager for this to happen but had failed to draw any promise from me, I cast myself at his feet, begging him earnestly and with tears in such terms as a sinner would use, to be received by him. He gladly granting my prayer provided the necessary habit, as soon as he could, that is, on the next day, and invested me with it, my mother in tears looking on afar off, and ordered that alms should forthwith be offered that day.

Meanwhile my former master, not being able to teach me any longer because of the strict rule of the brotherhood, at least took care to urge me to search diligently those holy books which I was reading, to study those less known by more learned men, to compose short pieces of prose and verse, warning me to apply myself the more closely because less care was being expended by others on my instruction. And, O Lord, True Light, I well remember the inestimable bounty Thou didst then bestow on me. For so soon as I had taken Thy habit at Thy invitation, a cloud seemed to be removed from the face of my understanding and that wherein I had wandered blindly and in error, began to be apprehended by it. Besides I was suddenly inspired with such love of learning that for this above all I yearned and thought the day was lost on which I did not engage in some such work. How often did they think me asleep and resting my little body under the coverlet, when my mind was concentrated on composition, or I was reading under a blanket, fearful of the rebuke of the others.

And Thou, Holy Jesus, knowest with what motive I so acted, chiefly to win glory, that greater honour in this present world might be mine. My very friends

wrought certain harm to me, for although they gave me good advice, yet oft they plied me with talk of fame and literary distinction and, through these, the winning of rank and wealth. And so they put into my short sighted mind, hopes worse than the egg of asps, and as I believed that all their promises would quickly come to pass, they only mocked me with the vainest expectations. For, whereas they spoke of things that might befall in the fulness of age, I was counting on their certain attainment in youth or early manhood. They forsooth set before me the getting of knowledge, which by Thy gift was daily growing up in me, with the worldly advantages of birth and a handsome person, but they remembered not Thy command that by such steps a man may not climb to Thy altar, for thus is baseness wont to be revealed. For he that climbeth by any other way, is a thief and a robber, which is baseness.

But in these beginnings of mine under Thy inspiration, had its wisdom been of another sort, my mind might have been prepared for temptation; in truth my wisdom at that time was in a manner only foolishness. Childish indeed as were my stirrings then to joy or fear, would that I now so feared Thy judgments, O Lord, so hated my great sins, as then I did those that were little, or scarcely sins at all. I did indeed with much eagerness strive to imitate those whom I saw weeping bitterly for their sins, and whatever came of Thee, was dear to my sight and hearing. And I, who now search the Scriptures to find matter for display and mere words, and even store in my mind the ill-famed works of pagan writers to make mere babbling, in those days got from them tears and cause for sorrow, and thought my reading vain, if I found in it no matter for medi-

tation, nothing leading to repentance, so unwisely wise was I.

But that old Foe, who by ages of experience has learnt exactly how to deal with the varying conditions of heart and age, he, I say, according to the measure of my little mind and body, conceived for me new conflicts. For by presenting to my gaze in sleep many visions of dead men, chiefly those whom I had seen or heard of as slain with swords or by some such death, he so terrified my spirit, when relaxed in sleep, by such sights that but for the watchful protection of that master of mine, I could not be kept in my bed, or from calling out, or even from losing my wits. And although this trouble may seem childish and ridiculous to those who have not felt it, by those who are oppressed by it, it is regarded as a great calamity, so that fear itself, by most men thought foolish, can by no reasoning, no counsel, be held in check, and whereas the sufferer himself values not a straw that which he suffers, the spirit, when once for a brief moment plunged in sleep, cannot by its mastery shake off the horrid sights, nay, his soul deeply disturbed by its terrors, dreads the return of sleep itself. To this emotion crowds or solitude are the same, the company of others being no defence against fear, whilst dwelling alone makes it worse or leaves it as bad as before.

Far different, Lord God, was my condition then from my present state ; then certainly I lived in great fear of Thy law and in unbounded loathing of all sin, and eagerly I drank in all that could be said or heard or known from Thee. I know, Heavenly Father, that by such aspirations of the child the devil was savagely enraged, later, alas, to be appeased by the surrender of all my pious fervour. Hence

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one night, when awake with wretched grief—in winter, I believe—I was lying in my bed, seeming to be safer with a lamp close by that gave a bright light, when suddenly and close by, from above, I thought, there arose a shouting of many voices in the dead of the night, and a voice without words, but full of woe. Thereupon, dizzy with the shock, I was rapt from my senses and fell on sleep, in which I thought I saw a dead man, who, some one cried out, had been killed at the baths. Crying out with the terror of the phantasy, I leapt from my bed, and looking round, as I leapt, I saw the lamp extinguished and in the midst of a cloud of gathering darkness fell on my eyes, a devil in his own shape standing near. At that horrible sight I should have gone almost mad, had not my master, who was usually on guard to control my terrors, adroitly soothed my perturbed and wandering wits.

It was not unknown to me even in the tender years of childhood that the desire for a right mind then burning in my heart, enraged the devil in no small measure to stir up wretchedness in me. Gracious God, what victories, what crown for victories should I have won now, had I stood fast to the end in that struggle! By many conclusions drawn from tales I have heard, I find that devils are most fiercely embittered against recent converts or those who continually aspire to a godly life. Hence I remember that in the time of Guy, the Bishop of Beauvais aforesaid, there was a certain young knight in his household, for whom the Bishop had a special affection above almost all his retainers. This man repenting with horror of his vices, resolved at all costs to fly from contact with the world. Whilst torn with anxious thought on his strange condition, one night

he was sleeping in the Bishop's dormitory and with him were one Ivo, a native, I believe, of St. Quintin and a god-fearing man, another a distinguished scholar even more famous for his eloquence, besides a monk of Cluny, who under the Abbot Hugh of blessed memory, filled in that place the office of Prior, with certain others of holy life and good birth, all sleeping there, as well as the Bishop. And one of the nobles of a neighbouring town, a very courtly and discreet man, lay awake whilst the rest slept in the dead of the night. And as his thoughts wandered at will and his eyes roved hither and thither, behold the figure of a tall devil with a small head and a hunched back appeared advancing, who looking at each of the beds in turn proceeded to walk right round the room. And when the great Deceiver came to the bed of the young man, whom I mentioned as being most beloved by the Bishop, he halted and turning his gaze on the sleeper, said : " This fellow with his uneasy mind troubles me more than all the rest who sleep here." Saying that and directing his steps to the door of the *rere-dorter* he entered therein.

Now he who was looking on, whilst noticing all this, was oppressed with such a burden as made speech or movement impossible. But when the Adversary went out, both faculties returned to him and in the morning, on relating his vision to the wiser men and enquiring with them into the condition and disposition of that young man, he found that his heart was earnestly set on entering a holier life. If therefore there is joy in heaven over one sinner that is converted more than over the ninety and nine good men that need no repentance, without doubt we may fully believe that the enemies of the human race are vexed with the most bitter hatred at the

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rescue of those who change for the better. And just as I, who began so well, am in my later stages so desperately bad, so he, after the devil's testimony to him, henceforward gradually fell away and grew cold, returning to his worldly cares; yet one may believe how painfully that sudden stirring of our good intentions must sting the hearts of devils. And no wonder that the Devil is grieved by the sudden though barren aspirations of any penitent, when the shallow self-abasement of that wicked king Ahab turned upon him the regard of God before the regard of men. Hence the Lord of Elijah, if I am not mistaken, said, "Hast thou not seen the abasement of Ahab before me? Because therefore he has been abased because of me, I will not bring evil in his day."

CHAPTER XVI

Now with the gradual growth of my little body, as its carnal life began to stir my itching heart with fleshly longings and lusts according to its stature, my mind oft fell to remembering and thinking on what and how great I might have been in the world, in which my imaginings often travelled beyond the truth. These thoughts, Gracious God, Thou didst reveal to Thy servant, my mother. Whatsoever the state, healthy or diseased, to which my unstable heart changed, thereafter there came to her in a vision by Thy will, O God, an image of the same. But whereas dreams are said to follow upon much care, and that is verily true, yet her cares were not aroused by the heat of greed, but were created by a real eagerness for inward holiness. Soon therefore when

the troubling vision was impressed on her pious mind, as she was very subtle and clear sighted in the interpretation of such matters, soon, I say, when she had perceived that this trouble was betokened by her dream, she summoned me and in private questioned me how and what I was doing. And since I was in such submission to her that my will was one with hers, I readily confessed all those things which I had heard as in a dream, into which my mind seemed to relax and fall, and after her counsel concerning amendment, I at once gave her my promise with true affection.

O my God, oft did she declare in dark sayings that state in which I now am, and what she believed I had done or must do in that earlier condition, that I now experience every day and see it filling up the secret places of my heart. Nay, even my master himself with the same everpresent anxiety, enlightened by Thee, saw through many kinds of phantoms what was happening at the time and what might come to pass in the future. By God's goodness therefore in alarming, and again in comforting me, adversity and success were foretold, so that whether I would or not, I refrained from secret vice, because by Thy wonder-working so much was revealed to those who loved me ; and sometimes I rejoiced in the promise of a better hope.

Now at a time when I was swayed by a spirit of sullenness by reason of the envy which I endured from my superiors and equals, I was eager with the aid of my kin to be transferred to other monasteries. For some of our brotherhood, seeing me once far below them both in age and learning, in ability and understanding, and afterwards perceiving that I equalled them, or, if I may say so, altogether sur-

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passed them through His gift alone who is the key of all knowledge instilling into my heart a hunger for learning, with such rage did their wrathful wickedness blaze forth against me, that, wearied with everlasting disputes and quarrels, I often regretted I had ever seen or known letters. Certainly my work was so much upset by them and so many brawls started, when occasion arose, about those letters by their constant questions, that they seemed to have this single object in view, to make me change my resolve and to embarrass my understanding. But as, when oil is poured on a fire, it bursts into a livelier flame with that which was supposed to put it out, the more that, like an oven, the capacity of my mind was overtaxed in such labours, the better it became, rendered stronger by its own heat. The questions by which they thought to crush me, gave exceeding keenness to my intelligence, and the difficulty of their objections, through much pondering to find answers and the turning over of various books, begat a strengthening of my wits and ability in debate. And so, although I was thus bitterly hated by them, yet Thou knowest, O Lord, how little, if at all, I hated them, and when they could not, as they wished, put any stigma upon me, they everywhere affirmed in disparagement that I was too proud of my little learning.

Amid these annoyances that I took very hardly, although by difficulties of this sort was begotten abundant good, yet my spirit grew weak, languishing under the endless torture of its thoughts. With fearful heart and failing powers of reason I began to consider what profit there was in hardship and eagerly decided to seek retreat whither my carnal weakness prompted me. When therefore I made my proposal

that I should leave the place, not so much with the kindly permission of the Abbot, as at the suggestion and demand of my kinsfolk, the assent of my mother also being given in the belief that I was doing this from pious motives (for the place to which I wished to retire, was considered very holy), the following vision appeared to her to witness to the good and evil in me.

She thought she was in the church of that convent, that is, of Ely, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and looking more closely she saw it was naked and desolate; the monks too were not only ragged and covered with wrappers huge beyond belief, but all alike were shortened to a cubit in height like those called dwarfs. But because, where the treasure is, there is the heart also, and where the gaze is turned, there is love, after fixing a long look on me, she saw that I stood no higher than the rest and was covered with no better apparel. And as she was sorrowful at my plight and that of the church, behold a woman of surpassing beauty and majesty advanced through the midst of the church right up to the altar, followed by one like a young girl and having all the appearance of a respectful attendant upon her. Being very curious therefore to know who the lady was, she was told she was the Lady of Chartres. At once she interpreted this to mean the Mother of God, whose name and relics there are venerated throughout almost all the Latin world. Now going up to the altar she bent her knees in prayer; and that too did the noble attendant behind her. Then rising and stretching out her hand with much passion she said, "This church I founded, how can I suffer it to be deserted?" Thereupon the Standard-Bearer of Piety turning her tranquil gaze on me and pointing with

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her shining hand said, "I have brought him here and made him a monk, whom I will by no means suffer to be taken hence." These words in like manner the attendant repeated. No sooner had that powerful one spoken than in a moment all that ruin and waste was changed and became anew what it had been at first and the dwarf stature both of the rest and of myself was by the power that attended her command, amended and made normal. After my mother looking into the future had given me an orderly narrative of this dream, I receiving it with much remorse and tears, so subdued the license of my wandering thoughts to the meaning of that welcome vision, that no longer was I drawn by a desire for another convent.

O Lady, Mother of Heaven, these and like commands after the horror of my sins and my countless revolts from thy love and service, gave me a handle for returning to thee, a song breaking forth from my heart, that the wide bosom of thy mercies cannot be closed against me even by mountains of ill deeds. . . . Ever shall I remember too, Lady of Heaven, that when, as a boy, I was eager to put on this habit, one night in a vision I was in a chapel dedicated to thee and I thought I was carried from it by two devils. And when they had taken me to the roof of the church, they fled away and let me go uninjured within the walls of that church. These things I oft recall, when I consider how little I amend, and often as I repeat those sins, adding to them sins worse than the very worst, with thee, most holy one, I take refuge to flee from the peril of despair, but not in abuse of too much hope or any hope at all.

For although I am ever sinning, compelled by my weakness, and not through pride's wilfulness, yet I

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in no wise lose hope of amendment. Seven times indeed falleth the just man and riseth again. If the number seven here stands, as it usually does, for an infinitely large number, then in however many ways a man falls by sin, if he has but a resolve to rise again to righteousness, however much his weak flesh trips him up, if he show but the grief of a penitent, he doth in no wise lose the name of a righteous man. For to what end do we cry aloud to God to bring us out of our distresses, but that the corruption of our nature condemns us, whether we will or no, to the service of sin? "I see it," says he, "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members; for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do." There is therefore a deep of certain evils, into which if a man come, then cometh contempt, and yet over other deeps cry is made unto God and the petitioner doubteth not that his voice is heard. There is indeed a scorn of despair begotten by excess of sinning, in which there is no standing, in which misery standeth not. There is lastly the deep out of which Jeremiah was drawn by a rope of rags, and although that be deep, yet farther on it hath bottom; for despite the loosening of the understanding by much sinning, yet reason gives some little check, that it be not swallowed up in the bottomless gulf never to return to a knowledge of all its iniquity.

Meantime having steeped my mind unduly in the study of verse-making, so as to put aside for such worthless vanities the serious things of the divine pages, under guidance of my folly I went so far as read the poems of Ovid and the *Bucolics* of Virgil and to aim at the airs and graces of a love poem in a critical treatise and in a series of letters. My mind

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therefore forgetting a proper severity and abandoning the modesty of a monk's calling, was led away by these enticements of a poisonous license, giving weight only to this whether some courtly phrase could be referred to some poet, with no thought how much the toil which I loved might hurt the aims of our holy profession. By love of it I was doubly taken captive, being snared by the wantonness of the sweet words I found in the poets and those which I poured forth myself and caught by immodest fleshly stirrings through thinking on these things and the like.

For since my unstable mind, unaccustomed now to hard thinking, spent itself on these trifles, no sound could come from my lips, but that which my thought prompted.

Hence it came to pass that, from the boiling over of the madness within me, I fell into certain obscene words and composed brief writings, worthless and immodest, in fact bereft of all decency. This having come to the knowledge of that master of mine, and he being much grieved thereat, it chanced that he fell asleep in the bitterness of his annoyance. And as he slept, there appeared to him the following vision. An old man with shining white hair, in fact that very one, I dare to say, who brought me to him at the beginning and had promised his love for me in the future, appeared to him and said with severity, "I wish you to give account to me for the writings that have been composed ; but the hand which wrote them, is not his who wrote." When this had been related by my master, he and I gave much the same interpretation to the dream ; for we sorrowed but with joy in Thy hope, O Lord, seeing Thy displeasure in that fatherly rebuke, and from the meaning of that vision

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taking some ground for trust that my frivolity would undergo a change to greater piety. For whereas the hand that wrote the letters, is said not to be his who wrote them, it is without doubt meant that it would not continue in such shameful doing. For it was mine and now is not, as it is written, "Change the wicked and they shall not be," and that which was mine in the practice of vice, when applied to the pursuit of virtue, became of no effect in that unworthy use of it. And yet Thou knowest, O Lord, and I confess, that at that time neither by fear of Thee, by shame, nor by respect for that holy vision was my life chastened. I put no check on that irreverence I had within me, and refrained not from the vain jests of frivolous writers. Hammering out these verses in secret and daring to show them to no one, or at least only to a few like myself, yet I read them out when I could, often inventing an author for them and I was delighted when those which I thought it inconvenient to acknowledge as mine, were praised by those who shared such studies, but whereas their author gained no praise by them, he had to be content with the enjoyment, or rather the shame of making them. But these acts, O Father, in Thine own good time Thou didst punish ; for misfortune coming on me for such work, Thou didst fence in my wandering soul with much affliction and hold me down by bodily infirmity. Therefore did a sword pierce through even to my soul, while trouble touched my understanding.

And so, when the punishment of sin had brought understanding to my hearing, then at last the folly of useless study withered away, yet since I could not endure to be idle, and was compelled, as it were, to cast aside vain imaginings, with renewal of my

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spiritual being I turned to more profitable exercises. I began therefore all too late to pant for that knowledge that so oft had been instilled in me by many good teachers, to busy myself, that is, with commentaries on the Scriptures, frequently to study the works of Gregory, in which are best to be found the keys to that art, and according to the rules of ancient writers to treat the words of the prophets and the Gospels in their allegorical, their moral and even their mystical meaning. In this work I had to encourage me Anselm, the Abbot of Bec, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, an Italian from across the Alps the country of Augustus, a man of sublime example and holiness of life. Whilst still holding office as Prior in the aforesaid convent, he admitted me to his acquaintance and, utter child as I was in knowledge as well as age, he readily offered to teach me to manage the inner self, how to consult the laws of reason in the government of the body. He both before and during his abbacy, being a familiar visitor to the monastery welcomed for his piety and his teaching, bestowed on me so assiduously the benefits of his learning and with such ardour laboured at this, that it seemed as if I alone was the reason for his frequent visits.

He taught us then to divide the mind into three or four parts, to treat the whole of the operations of this inner mystery under sensation, will, reason and perception, showing that the first two, regarded by most and by myself as one and free from definite divisions, were not identical, which however can readily be shewn to be the same as either of those coming third or fourth. And after he had discussed certain chapters of the Gospels on this principle and most clearly explained the difference between will

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and sensation, which however it was plain he did not originate, but got from books at hand, which did not so explicitly deal with these matters, I then began to imitate his methods in similar commentaries, so far as I could and everywhere in the Scriptures to examine carefully with all the energy of my mind anything that was morally in agreement with those ideas.

Hence it came to pass that on a day when I travelled with my Abbot to a certain convent in our province, I suggested to him as a man of great piety, that on coming to the chapter meeting, he should there preach a sermon ; and he turned upon me what he was asked to do, exhorting and ordering me to do it in his place. Now the birth of Mary Magdalene is celebrated on that day. Therefore taking the subject of my discourse from the Book of Wisdom, I contented myself with that single word for the address that was required. "Wisdom," that is, "overcometh malice, reacheth from end to end and disposeth all things agreeably." When I had explained this with such oratory as I could, and had pleased my audience by the suitability of my language, the Prior of the church, no mean student of sacred literature within the limits of his understanding, in a friendly way asked me to write something which he might use for the matter of a sermon. Since therefore I knew that my Abbot would be annoyed by my writings, I approached him with caution and begged him to give me permission to please one whom he professed to love and as though I came straight from the man himself, but did not care much about it. Supposing therefore that I should write very briefly, he consented ; then having snatched his consent from his mouth, I began to work at what I had in mind.

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Now I had in mind to attempt a moral commentary on the beginning of Genesis, that is the Six Days. To the Commentary I prefixed a treatise of moderate length shewing how a sermon ought to be composed. I followed up this preface with a figurative exposition at length of the six days with poor eloquence, but such as I was capable of. But when my Abbot saw that I was commenting on a chapter of that sacred history, he no longer took a reasonable view of the matter and when he with much anger warned me to put an end to these writings, I, seeing that such works only put thorns in his eyes, avoided both his presence and that of any who might report it to him, and completed my task in secret. For I made no notes in my tablets for the composition and writing of this or any other of my works, but committed them to the written page without alteration, as I thought them out. In that Abbot's time therefore my studies were carried on in complete secrecy. But when he was gone, finding my opportunity when the pastoral office was vacant, at last I attacked and quickly finished my work. This was contained in ten books arranged according to the above-mentioned four activities of the inner man and I so carried out the moral treatment in all of them that they went from beginning to end with absolutely no change in the order of the passages. Whether in this little work I helped any one, I know not, although I have no doubt that some learned men were pleased with it ; but this is certain that I gained no little profit from it myself, insomuch as it saved me from idleness, that servant of vice.

Meantime I wrote a little book in chapters on various passages in the Gospels and the prophets, including some from the books of Numbers, Joshua

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and Judges, the completion of which I am putting off, because after finishing what I have in hand, I propose, if I am still alive and God prompts me, to engage at times in similar exercises. In most of these I followed a figurative, in a few an allegorical treatment in the same manner as in Genesis. Moreover, in Genesis I gave my attention chiefly to morals, not that there was wanting matter for thought on the allegorical side, had I equally worked that out, but because in my opinion morals were in these times more important than allegory, when faith by God's help stands intact, but morals are universally debased by the many forms of vice, and because it was neither within my power nor my wish to enlarge my book to excessive length.

CHAPTER XVIII

Now my mother, pleased as was her wonder at my success in learning, was much perturbed by her dread of the excesses of a dangerous time of life. Hence how earnestly did she pray that I should imitate herself. She to whom God had given such beauty, thought little of that in her which won praise, as though she was not aware of her comeliness, and cherished her widowhood as if she had loathed the suffrances of a wife's duties. Yet Thou knowest, O Lord, what loyalty, what love she rendered to her dead husband, how with almost daily sacrifices, prayers and tears, and no scant almsgiving, she strove without ceasing to release his soul, which she knew to be in prison through his sins. Wherefore by the wonderful dispensation of God it came about that her

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sensitive imagination saw in frequent visions what pains he endured in his purgatory. Such visions, one cannot doubt, proceed from God ; for when no perverse carelessness is caused by false assumptions of the beauty of life, but a stimulus is given to prayer and almsgiving by the sight of suffering and punishment, when the remedies of the divine office are clearly demanded by the dead, ay, even by the angels, who care for the faithful dead, it is proof enough that these things are of God, because devils never seek the salvation of any man's soul. Therefore was that good woman's anxious soul kindled again at these signs, and inflamed by the intimation of his soul's torments, to constant effort by intercession for her former husband.

Hence for instance one night, a Sunday after matins in the summer, having gone to rest on her narrow bench, and beginning soon to fall asleep, she thought her spirit left her body without losing her senses. And being drawn, as it were, through a porch, at last issuing from it, she began to come near to the edge of a pit. When close to it, behold from the depths of that pit, people like goblins leapt forth, their hair seeming to be all eaten up with worms, trying to seize her with their hands and to drag her inside. And, behold, from behind the frightened woman, who was terribly distressed by their attack, there broke out a cry against them, saying " Touch her not." And compelled by that cry they leapt back into the pit. Now I omitted to say that as she passed through the porch, her one prayer to God, as she knew she had left her mortal being, was to be allowed to return to her body. Being rescued therefore from the dwellers in the pit, and being opposite to the edge thereof, she suddenly saw my father

standing by her appearing as he did when a youth, and when she looked hard at him and piteously begged of him whether he were really Everard (for that had been his name), he said he was not.

Now it is no wonder that a spirit should deny the name which he had as a man ; for a spirit should give no reply to spirit which is inconsistent with his spiritual nature. Moreover, that spirits should be known by names is too absurd to be believed ; otherwise in the next world recognition, except that of kinsfolk, would be rare. Clearly it is not necessary for spirits to have names, since all their vision, nay, their knowledge of vision is from within. Since therefore, he denied that that was his name and yet she was as certain that it was, she then asked him where he was dwelling. And he gave her to understand that the street was not far off where he lived. But having bared his arm and his side, he shewed both of them so torn, so cut up with many wounds, that a great shuddering thereat and disquiet of heart came on her, as she looked. Moreover, there was there the figure of a little child crying so bitterly that it troubled her much when she saw it. And being moved by its cries, she said to him, “ How, Lord, can you endure the wailing of this child ? ” “ Whether I will or not,” said he, “ I endure it.” Now the crying of the child and the wounds on the arm and side have this meaning. When my father in his youth was separated from lawful intercourse with my mother through the magic arts of certain persons, some evil counsellors approached him in his youthful innocence with wicked advice to try if intercourse with other women was possible. He like a young man took their advice, and having wickedly had intercourse with some woman, begat a child, which at once died before it

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was baptised. By the rending of his sides is meant therefore the breaking of the marriage vow ; by the shrillness of those troublesome cries the ruin of the child's soul thus wickedly begotten. Such, O Lord, O Inexhaustible Goodness, was Thy retribution on the soul of the sinner, who yet was alive through faith. But let us return to the orderly narrative of the vision.

When she had asked him whether prayer, almsgiving or the mass gave him any relief (for he was aware that she was frequently offering this for him,) having replied that they did, he added, " But amongst you there lives a certain Leodegardis." mentioning that name, my mother thought, that she might ask the woman, why he remembered her. Now the said Leodegardis was a woman of very lowly spirit, who lived plainly and apart from the customs of the world. Meantime, bringing her talk with my father to an end, she looked towards the pit above which was a picture ; and in the picture she saw a certain knight Rainold, of no mean reputation among his countrymen, who that very day, Sunday, as I have said, was treacherously killed at Beauvais by his fellow-Christians after dinner. He therefore in that picture on bended knee and stooping forward with puffing cheeks was raising a fire in a heap of fuel. This vision was seen in the morning, whereas he perished at midday, doomed to descend into those flames which he had kindled by his deserts. She saw also in the said picture one who was helping, but who died long afterwards, even my brother, taking a dreadful oath by the sacrament of God's body and blood. By this nothing else than this is meant, that by false swearing and by taking in vain the holy name of God and His sacred mysteries, he earned both his punishment and the place of his punishment.

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She saw also in the course of the same vision that old woman, who, I have said, lived with her at the beginning of her conversion, a woman who was always mortifying her body with crosses only on the outside, but, it was said, was not enough on her guard against a hunger for vain glory. This woman she saw carried off by two black spirits, her form a mere shadow. Moreover, while that old woman was alive and they two dwelt together, once when they talked of the state of their souls and the coming of death, they took a mutual pledge that the one who died first, should, if it pleased God, appear to the survivor and make known to her what was her condition, good or bad. And this they confirmed by prayer, earnestly beseeching God that after the death of either the other should be allowed to discover by the revelation of some vision her happy or unhappy state. The old woman too when about to die, had seen herself in a vision deprived of her body and going with others like her to a certain temple, and, as she went, she seemed to be carrying a cross on her shoulders. Now coming to the temple with that company, she was compelled to stay outside, the doors being barred against her. Lastly she appeared to some one else after her death in the midst of a great stench, giving her many thanks, because by her prayers she had saved her from decay and pain. Besides, whilst this woman was dying, at the foot of the bed she saw standing a devil of horrid shape with eyes of dreadful and monstrous size. But she adjured him by the holy sacrament to flee in confusion from her and seek nothing of her, and by that charge drove him off.

My mother therefore, drawing her conclusions about the cries of the infant, of whose existence she had been aware, from the exact way in which the vision

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agreed with the facts, when she put them together, and from the urgent warning of the impending death of the soldier soon afterwards, whom she had seen assigned to the place of punishment below, and having no doubt about these things, devoted herself wholly to bringing help to my father. And setting like against like, she chose to take to herself a little child only a few months old that had lost its parents. But the Devil hating good intentions and likewise faithful actions, so harassed my mother and her servants by the madness of the child's wailing and crying at night,—although by day it was quite good, by turns playing and sleeping,—that scarcely could any one get sleep in the same room. I have heard the hired nurses say that night after night they could not stop shaking that child's rattle, so naughty was he, not through his own fault, but made so by the devil within. And a woman's craft failed entirely to drive him out. Excessively harassed was the good woman, by no contrivance able amid those shrill cries to relieve her aching brow, nor could any sleep steal over her sorely-tried and exhausted head, the frenzy of the child goaded from within and the enemy's presence causing continual disturbance. And although the nights were so passed by her, yet never was she found sluggish in performance of the sacred offices of the night. Since therefore, she knew that these troubles were to purge away the sufferings of the man whom she had seen in the vision, she gladly bore them, because she rightly thought that by sharing his suffering herself she was lessening the pains of that other sufferer. Yet never did she therefore shut the child out of her house, never become less careful for him ; nay, so much the more did she choose to submit to any inconvenience rising from

it, as she perceived that the devil had terribly broken forth against her to weaken her resolve. For the more she happened to feel the eagerness of the devil in the irritation of the child, the more she was assured that his evil sway over the soul of her husband was being countered.

CHAPTER XIX

MANY other signs didst Thou shew, O Lord God, to Thy handmaid and to that master whom Thou didst especially appoint over me, some which might be set down to my boasting, if I were to write them here, in which there shone forth that good hope which even now I wait for under Thy most gracious loving Mother, before whom I was laid even from the womb ; and some shewn to them, when I was yet but a child, have come true now in my ripening age. At last the heat of my desire leapt into flame, and because Thou hadst put into my heart the tinder of a little knowledge and hadst bestowed on me a person well fitted for worldly success with moderately good birth, it was evilly suggested by my own kin and by others my friends, in this matter my bad friends, that it would be proper for me to get advancement in this world by promotion to some office. But I know, O Lord, that in Thy law Thou didst forbid ascent to Thy altar by the steps of honour, for so, Thou didst teach, might the baseness of a holy leader be revealed. For those who have attained to spiritual rule by prominence in external qualities, have the more shameful fall on that account, because leaving the level ground of their capacity they have tried to scale the heights of glory above their heads. And

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whilst I was certainly eager for promotion through the influence of my kinsfolk, my ears were often gratified by rumours of success in attaining such heights ; many flattered me, wishing for their own ends to test my character, that they might carry out their purpose of reporting it to those who were wickedly jealous of me, or supposing that they would please me by pretending to desire my advancement, and saying that my advantage would be their gain too and therefore ever grasping at a better position for themselves through my rise.

But I, as Thou knowest, my Creator, by Thy impulse alone recovered from my folly, so as through fear of Thee to scorn seeking of favours from any man or granting of conference or encouragement to one who was working for this on my behalf, to secure what is for Thee alone to give, an office in the church. And Thou knowest, O Lord, that in this matter at least I desire nothing at all, nor will ever desire, except, what I receive or shall receive from Thee. For I will that in this Thou shouldst make me, as otherwise Thou didst make me, and not I myself. Else would not Israel well rejoice in Him that made him. My God, by what opposition, by what envy was I then oppressed ! Hence was my mind secretly in turmoil at the suggestions made to it from without in its efforts, as it were, to escape temptation ; but although that desire was hot within me, yet was it not strong enough to pass my lips. Although I was troubled, yet did I not speak. Thou knowest, Jesus, that once when sin tripped me up, I told one who was working for this, but not at my prompting, to do quickly what he was about. Thou knowest, I say, how vexed I was that I had spoken thus. For however often I may have wickedly fallen, I ever feared to be a buyer

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or seller of doves. And certainly whereas there is one dove among them, there are chairs, not one chair. For whatever division there is in God and the Church, comes not from him who suffers thereby. "That they may be one," he says, "even as we are one." And, "There are differences of gifts, but the same spirit dividing to each severally as he will," and the following "The throne," not thrones, "is for ever," and "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon My throne." What therefore is one with God, becomes several through the aims of human perversity.

Considering these things and not being ignorant of the unity of the head and the body, I had no wish to usurp in the body, because whatever thrusts itself in from elsewhere, is certainly not in agreement with the head and no one can doubt that the head knows not what is not approved in the body. For those who will say, "Have we not prophesied in Thy name and cast out devils?" are especially apostate, as it were, and no fellow-members, and therefore, "I know you not," they hear said, as if He said, "I know they are not in Mine, because they do not live of Mine." Therefore a hope, sorry tho' it was, lightened my scorn, and I prayed to Thee, O God, that if ever that should come to pass which was being attempted in my behalf, it should be by Thy doing, and I was vexed, because I heard through others that this was being procured for me by my kinsfolk, whereas others were chosen by the simple working of God and with no earthly influence to get it for them. For my kinsmen looking out not so much for me as for themselves in this business, did not deal with me at all in the matter, being plainly unwilling to stir up my youthful feelings over it. At last, God being unwilling that I should any longer

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be deceived, inspired my supporters to go abroad for the salvation of their souls, and it became necessary for the monks of certain abbeys, who depended on them to secure my election, to turn elsewhere.

God, I thank Thee that then my childish desires entirely withered away and that it no longer pleased me to look for any earthly dignity. Thou didst scourge me in that time, O Father, O God, Chastener of my lusts and vanities, and didst bring me back to Thy knowledge, binding me within, that my vagrant soul might escape nowhere, but should yearn from its inmost being for humility alone and sincerity of heart. Then first I began to try, O Lord, to withdraw myself into that godly solitude of the mind with Thee, in which Thou art wont to abide, to the Mother of the heavenly kingdom, Mary, Mother of God, my only refuge in every need, and to launch at her the embracing love of my inward fervour. And so I heartily desired to be humble, I wholly dreaded higher rank and the empty shadow of a great name in the world. Then by the sweet savour of her close friendship did I further learn of her what singleness of heart was, what its purity, what an unbending resolve to be for ever poor. What shall I say, Lord, of the quick passing of that paradise, its short surcease of care, the brief uncertain taste of its delights?

Hardly had I known this foretaste of happiness, hardly had Thy Spirit, which had smitten me down to the earth, dwelt for a little while in my enlightened reason, when, behold, as who should say, "When you would, then would not I; now you will not and mislike it, then be it so, whether you will or no," there came to pass my election to office by certain men, distant and unknown to me. But what a choice they made! Truthfully should I confess

myself marked out from other men, since by Thy testimony, O God, amongst all who were opposed to me, I was judged more vile, ay, the worst of all. The little learning I had attained, had made my electors blind or short-sighted. Gracious God, what would they have said, had they seen my inner self? What would they have thought, had they known what sort of head over them I was? Thou knowest, who in Thy inscrutable wisdom didst ordain this, how I disdain myself, how I loathe that amongst other men better and more worthy of honour than myself I should be first instead of last; for Thou knowest, who seest beforehand into the heart and reins that I by no means coveted such honours and yet was unwilling to be despised and shamefully rejected, and heartily I prayed to Thee that I might be excused from this work, that I might not take up a dreadful burden, which I feared beyond measure, and that I might not in my weakness draw back from my refusal.

Thou wast not ignorant, my God, how vexed and displeased my mother was at my election, that what seemed to others an honour, was to her an intolerable sorrow, wishing that no such thing had fallen to my lot, for therein she dreaded the trials of a yet ignorant youth, chiefly because I was entirely unskilled in legal matters; and no wonder, since I had never cared to study law, being then devoted to letters only. Yet she and almost all that knew me well, used to declare that I should not long be without promotion of some kind. Thou only, O Lord, knowest with what inward sight she spoke of the good and ill that would befall me, if I should be advanced. All these I feel to-day; they are hidden neither from me nor from others. By many visions, in which I and others

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figured, she foresaw things that would happen long afterwards, some of which I see are surely coming to pass or have already come, and the rest I as certainly expect to befall ; but about these I of set purpose intend to say nothing.

O God, with what warnings did she urge me to keep worldly lusts out of my heart ! foretelling with certainty the ill chances of adversity which I have suffered, bidding me always be on my guard against the instability of youth, to bridle the mind wandering through mazes of thought ; so discussing these matters that she might have been thought some eloquent bishop rather than the illiterate woman she was. Now the monastery I was chosen to rule, is named Nogent and is in the borders of the diocese of Laon, lying so near that a small stream, sometimes stagnant, called the Ailette, is the boundary between this province and that of Soissons ; about its antiquity we hope to treat in this book.

CHAPTER XX

BUT since, as I have said, we lived united in this church of Ely under God as our father, and the patronage of the blessed Germer, the founder of the place, let me hand down to future generations some of the things I heard there or saw happen. When this church was restored after its destruction by the Danes, a certain monk there holding the office of Prior, named Sigger, a man of good life, lay ill of a mortal sickness. He was, if I am not mistaken, a brother of the old woman who was associated with my mother at the beginning of her conversion. And

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as he lay there, the Devil stood before him holding a book in his hands and saying, "Take, read ; Jupiter sends it to you." He being horrified at hearing that accursed name, the Devil said further, "Do you love your house ?" "I do," said he. And he replied, "Know that it will lose all the severity of its rule and after a time the brotherhood will be broken up." And the monk confounding the speaker of these words with the rebuke he deserved, the Enemy vanished from his presence, but the monk after relating what he had seen, turned mad and had to be put under restraint. Before he expired, however, he regained his wits and making a good confession, so passed away. Since therefore we know that the Devil is a liar and the father of lying, we believe that he spoke out of his usual envy, else Heaven forbid that this should come true. For the fortunes of the church afterwards improved and are still doing so.

CHAPTER XXI

I saw in that place in our time a monk who had been a soldier, a plain man, as was believed, and advanced in years, who had been appointed by his Abbot to a certain hermitage of the church in the village of Vexin, because he was a native of the place. He with the consent of his Prior, resolved to repair the high road, which had been broken up,. He carried out this work aided by the gifts of the faithful, and when it was finished, he kept some sums that were left over from the offerings. Meanwhile he was seized with a mortal sickness and yet did not by any confession reveal what he wickedly kept hidden. He

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was taken to the monastery to which he belonged ; he confessed neither to the Abbot nor to the Prior, although terrible torments, no doubt the heralds of death, were felt by him, but the sum of silver was entrusted by him to a certain servant who attended the sick.

And so as the dead of night drew near, he lost all feeling of pain and lay stretched as dead on the ground ; we, summoned by the beating of the wooden signal, went through the psalms, prayers and all that can help those about to die. This being done, the man with the hair shirt beneath him according to monastic custom, was left there breathing, as it seemed, with difficulty at his last gasp, none of us expecting him to live, but all prepared for the last rites of the dead. Immediately on our departure he recovered his breath ; called for the Prior, the Abbot being absent ; told him of the theft he had committed and to whom he had entrusted the stolen money. At once after telling this and receiving absolution from the Prior, rattling in his throat came back and he breathed his last. The Prior at that time was my master, whom I have often mentioned. Behold the multitude of the Lord's mercies, because we were not consumed, for to whomsoever he will, he giveth widest freedom from narrow straits !

After the man had been taken from this world, the whole of the enquiry about the money turned upon the servant. Now he had hidden the sum in the straw of his child's cradle. But at night when the child was put to bed, behold devils like little dogs leapt upon it from the side and behind, beating on it here, there and all round, sometimes nipping it and making it cry out and weep. And being asked by both parents why it wept, it said it was being eaten

up by little dogs. Then the mother, who had been my mother's maid and at one time her attendant, ran to her mistress, that is my mother, and told her of the stolen money wickedly placed in her charge and further of the child's danger of being torn to pieces by the dogs. To her she said : " Be sure they are devils, who are rejoicing over that devils' money, eager to get it because they know it is their own." When the husband knew, although he was unwilling and deeply vexed, I should imagine, he gave up what was demanded under compulsion or entreaty or by secret disposal of it and talked freely of the persecution of the devils, which followed upon the theft. We have heard that God hath mercy on whom He will, and we may gather from what follows that whom He will, He hardeneth. O wonderful judgments of God ! he of whom we have told this tale, had passed his whole life in knightly exercises and the foul company of harlots ; but he of whom I am about to speak, had been for some little time careless, but nothing dishonourable had ever come to light about him. Clearly this vice of avarice is the more harmful to monks as it is less natural, so that scarcely any crime can be found in which the devil ensnares men so often as that of pilfering.

CHAPTER XXII

ANOTHER of our monks in priest's orders, with whom no fault could be found, except his great love of riding, had received two shillings from a certain noble lady ; soon afterwards he fell sick of dysentery on a visit to St. Quintin's at Beauvais. When this

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was known at Ely, by the order of the Abbot he was carried back to his own church. At the time when he was eating well, but his food was passing through him without doing him any good, it chanced that his Abbot being about to go on a journey came to speak to him, fearing he might die, whilst he was away. But he, at the moment when the Abbot came, had yielded to the call of nature. And a stool being set down for him because he could not walk, the Abbot seeing him sitting thereon in a horribly disgusting state, after they had stared at one another, was ashamed at meeting the man in such circumstances, so the wretched man was unable to make his confession and indeed was unwilling to do so, or to be absolved from his crime. The Abbot retired, and he rising from the stool went to his bed to lie down, and there was strangled by the Devil, as he lay on his back. You could see his chin and throat horribly flattened on his breast as though pressed violently down. Unconfessed therefore, unanointed and without telling of his accursed money he died. And so when his body was stripped for washing, there was found hanging from his shoulder under his armpits a purse. When this was found, he who discovered it, dashing the purse on the ground in a rage and beating his hands together, ran to the monks and poured this extraordinary tale into their ears. Certainly it was a thing unheard of for a brother to die in this fashion.

And so he sends after the Abbot, who had begun his dinner at a certain house of his two miles beyond Beauvais. Now through another messenger, who had reached him, the Abbot had already heard that he was dead, but knew nothing and had said nothing about the money. The messenger therefore coming on behalf of the brothers who had sent him, consulted

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with the Abbot what ought to be done, whether it was lawful for him to be buried with the others, since he had so miserably broken the rule of having property in common binding on the rest. And when the Abbot had taken counsel with wise persons, he ordered his burial should take place out in the fields without prayer and psalms, and that the money should be laid on his breast. Yet private prayer did not fail to be offered by the brothers and they were the more earnest in so doing, inasmuch as they knew he needed it more. The sudden death of this man made the rest more careful in the matter of private possessions. Let us further hear how at other times they were chastised for other offences.

CHAPTER XXIII

NOR more than a few weeks afterwards it was the vigil of the martyrs, Gervase and Prothasius, when there was a little thunder and occasional lightning with thick clouds and tempestuous winds. Now in the morning when we rose, the summons for the first hour had just sounded ; we assembled in the church with unusual quickness and after a very short prayer we had said, " O God, come to my assistance " ; but when we were about to begin what follows, with thunder-clap a bolt from heaven broke into the church with the following results. The cock over the tower, the cross and the staff were either shattered or burnt ; the beam on which these stood, was weakened. Then after half-burning and tearing up the shingles fixed to them by nails, the bolt passed through the western window of the tower. The

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image of the crucified Lord standing beneath was broken, the head being shattered to pieces and the right side pierced, but not scorched, whilst the right arms both of the cross and of the figure were so burnt and maimed that with the exception of the thumb no one could find a single piece of the whole arm.

As therefore, when the shepherd is smitten, the sheep are scattered abroad with blows and death, the bolt passing to the right through the arch under which stood the stricken image, descended the stone of the arch in a two-forked black furrow and entering the choir struck dead in a moment two monks standing on either side of the arch. Then sweeping to the left on one side it stripped off the colouring from the surface of the stone not continuously, but stepwise as if a stone had been rolled over it, and crushed a monk standing there, although neither in the case of the two others nor of this one, was there any mark of injury to be seen on them, except that on the upturned eyes of the last one there appeared a little dust fallen from the arch. This indeed was remarkable, that the dead men remained sitting. But we, who, stupefied by the shock of the bolt, were half-dead, fell headlong on one another. Moreover, some of us who fell down, lost all feeling in the body below the girdle ; some were so hurt that, fearing their death, we hastily anointed them with holy oil. Darting into the breasts of some the flame burnt off the hair and scorched the growth of hair under the armpits and boring through the soles and sandals passed out by the extremities.

It is impossible to describe how with judgment the punishment of heaven raged, by what bends and turns it ran about, what it damaged, what it burned, what it broke. Nobody has heard anything like it

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as happening in France in our generation. I saw, I call God to witness, an hour after these things had happened, the image of the Blessed Mother of God, which stood below the crucifix, having such a disturbed look, so changed from her usual calm, that she seemed quite another person. Not trusting my own eyes I found out that the same thing had been noticed by others. When we had recovered from the amazement which had fallen on us through this event, after making confession, we began to reflect why we had suffered for our sins beyond human expression, and being brought by God face to face with ourselves, by looking into our consciences, we discovered how justly we had been punished. Thereupon we saw the face of the Holy Mother changed to a tranquil expression. Verily the grief and the shame which for some time we felt, passes all belief.

A few years later when the memory of this event had almost been wiped out of our minds, God gave us another warning of the same kind, except that no one was hurt. Now hard by the rising chimney of a certain room a peacock had perched to rest at night, pressing close to it when deep in sleep. It was the festival of St. James the Apostle, also Sunday, when in the night the crash of heavy thunder was heard and a bolt rushed into the chimney, ruining every part of that room that projected, but the peacock sitting on it remained undisturbed, a young monk sleeping below was not even roused from sleep, but a servant was struck with the loss of his wits and of the use of his limbs. According to the Blessed Augustine Heaven does not idly strike mountains and things inanimate, but to make us reflect that in striking at things that do not sin, he signifies a great judgment on sinners, and he brings in for example the

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nurse who strikes the ground with a stick to stop the naughtiness of the child.

When relating the earlier misfortune, I omitted to speak of the character of those who were killed. Two being novices had scarcely completed eight months as monks. Of these, one under a grave outside was inwardly not so good, the other under an appearance of levity was within, as far as we could tell, not so bad a man. They the day before they suffered, had clearly displayed the difference in character of which I have spoken. On the morning of the event when the one who was outwardly trifling, heard the sound of the thunder, he began at once to say silly things and immediately on entering the church was struck down by the lightning at which he laughed. But the third called Robert, whose name in the world was Columba because of his frank simplicity, a youth with his beard just beginning to grow, known for his thorough honesty, had been so active and wise in the church and the offices of the brotherhood, that he did duty as some one's substitute almost every day ; moreover he had a good knowledge of grammar. He in that morning hour that fostered his death, rising before me, contrary to his wont, to sit in the cloister, told me he was suffering from acute pain in the head and the rest of his body. Immediately afterwards he saw the disturbance in the heavens from which he soon died. See how before that destruction the two men's hearts were uplifted, although in the judgment of God the sentence soon to be passed was more severe for one of them ; but in the case of the third, depression of heart went before his glorification, since no one doubted that a high place in heaven would be his. For to some one it was presently shewn in a vision that these three were

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going together to St. Peter at Rome, two in shadowy outline that could hardly be seen, but the third clad in white was hastening there in the full vigour of his wisdom and activity.

Some years afterwards when we had forgotten these things and were become sluggish and careless, there came a third punishment ; this was after I had left the church. One morning, when there was stormy weather, they had gone in procession to the great altar to sing the litany—for they dared not remain in the choir where the first bolt had fallen—when suddenly a flame from heaven rushed down, and according to the testimony of those who saw it, descending right upon the base of the altar filled it all round with a foul stench like that of brimstone. There a monk in priest's orders was blinded, and two boys who had their heads bowed towards the pediment of the altar—one a converted Jew, but faithful at heart—were caught up by this bolt without knowing it, carried some distance and left with their feet towards the altar and their heads against the wall of the choir. The chest behind the altar was broken in places by the lightning entering it, and a chasuble which was reckoned very costly, (although the best part of the church's treasures, was there) was the only one damaged by a rent. There is a remarkable reason for this.

The king of the English, a very lawless man and an enemy of the Church, named Rufus, because he was red, whom God slew when hunting by the arrow of his own favourite, particularly desired to have this chasuble. Being unwilling to spend his own money he appointed a monk to arrange the matter with the Abbot of the monastery called Battle, sending word that he was to give fifteen marks to the

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monk. But when the Abbot refused, the monastery was violently plundered by the king and the Abbot was forced to redeem the plunder for fifteen marks. With this money by a sacrilegious fraud the chasuble was by sacrilegious men bought, and just as fraudently was it made, so that in the procuring of it, in the buying, as in the making of it, it was wholly compacted of accursedness ; for when after this event it was taken to pieces and valued, it proved not to be worth half the price. In its very making was detected the cheating of the buyer. This therefore, whilst the other ornaments were left uninjured, was justly condemned, although its trafficker escaped punishment.

Moreover before that happened the following vision appeared to a monk who had an uneasy conscience. The image of the crucified Lord seemed to descend from the cross, blood dripping from His hands, side and feet. Going through the midst of the choir He was heard to say, " Unless ye confess, ye will die." When he awoke, he was in great fear, but before he confessed, he underwent this danger with all the rest, but by his confession proved the justice of the judgment. Because of the danger that had fallen on them, on every anniversary there has been instituted for ever a fast with almsgiving, a daily mass to the blessed Mary in her chapel, besides a mass for the Birth of the Lord at the altar of St. Michael every Sunday. But now let us hasten on to other matters.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN that year four months after the first disaster a certain monk in priest's orders, once a secular chaplain

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in my mother's house, a man outwardly religious, but at that time hopelessly given up to monstrous vices, from which he could be kept by no human care, began quickly to grow feeble. And being unexpectedly brought near death in two days, he began to cast fearful glances in all directions. And when he was asked by those who knew his real character what he saw, he replied, "The house full of savage men." And when they perceived that those seen by him were none other than devils threatening him, they began to urge him to make the sign of the cross and to call with confidence on the Blessed Mother of God. "I should have hope and confidence in her," said he, "if these barons did not press me hard." It is remarkable that he called them barons, because in the Greek language that means "heavy"; and oh, how very heavy were they who had not been able by penitence or by invocation to remove their burdens ! At last they asked what was his real trouble. He replied that he felt as if a long sword, red-hot from the forge, was piercing through his heart and throat. Now when the night was at its stillest, so that not even a breath of wind was heard, the window case-ments in the house began to be thrown back on the walls and to be shaken again and again by a crowd of people entering. Two monks, whilst the rest in the house were asleep, were watching him, and being sure that such things did not proceed from what is good, were much perturbed. Now the words we have mentioned were amongst the things he said. Moreover, he was a man addicted to many shameful acts and therefore such a life was closed by such an end.

In the cemetery of that church a burial was being prepared for a dead monk, and he whose office it was

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could not remember whether he had made a grave in that spot. He dug, therefore, and having gone farther down, he found the plank which is usually placed under the tomb, and that being removed, he found the grave nearly empty except for the hood, commonly called the capuchon, with the head placed inside it, and the sandals full of hay (which was done at the time of the burial to make them fit better on the feet) at the foot of the grave, but between these nothing at all. When some had seen this and had reported it to us, we expressed our wonder at the incomprehensible judgment of God ; seeing these things done with such secret and subtle meaning. In it there was matter for wonder that the head was left there, but the body had been conveyed away from its place whither God pleased. Something similar to this I have heard from Manassis, the Archbishop of pious memory, who made a most faithful end a few years later, and in fuller detail from monks of the Blessed Remigius in the city of Rheims. Artaldus a certain Archbishop of this state, had been buried at the feet of the Blessed Remigius. A long time afterwards being disinterred for the purpose of certain necessary changes in the buildings, on his grave being opened, no body at all was found and of his garments only a chasuble left, this having no sign of decaying with the body, but remaining quite uninjured. And certainly if his body had rotted away, the decay would have affected the chasuble in particular. In these times we see what is said in the writings of the Blessed Gregory of the strange judgments passed by God on the dead bodies of the guilty, who are known not to have deserved burial in holy ground.

In the convent of nuns established at Caen and

built by Matilda, Queen of England, the wife of William, one of the Norman Counts (who had conquered the English), there was a certain nun who had fallen into some foul sins and could not by any admonition be induced to confess. In that obstinacy she was fated to die, having said while dying, nothing to do her any good. And when one of the sisters was sleeping one night in the cell where she had died, she saw in her sleep great fires burning in the fire-place of the house and the dead nun in the midst of it not only burning, but being beaten by two wicked spirits on either side with two hammers. And as she gazed at the dreadful torments of that wretched woman, it seemed that a spark darted into her eye from the stroke of a hammer. Then it chanced that she woke with the burning pain of the spark that had settled in her eye. And so it came about that what she had seen in the spirit, she suffered in the body and the real evidence of the hurt agreed with the truth of the vision.

CHAPTER XXV

THERE was a certain monk of Ely called Osmund, who had given much to a monastery, while still a clerk, and in the end entered it himself. He, after taking the habit, repented that good beginning and was exceedingly vexed at what he had done. But being chastised by God soon afterwards with bodily infirmity, he learnt and did what was more for his good, and now kept his holy profession, not because he must, but because he wished it. He being quicker to anger than was right, and being appointed care-

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taker of the church, expelled from it a poor man, who was importunately begging him for alms, more harshly than he ought. This having happened during the day, on the following night as he was going to open the doors to ring the bell for the first service, behold the Devil in the shape of the poor man whom he had harshly driven out the day before, met him, and raising his stick attacked the monk, as if to strike him. Now he had opened the doors in the screen that separates the clergy from the people and was going on to open the others through which the people enter, when suddenly, although the doors of exit in the upper part of the church were barred, from the middle of it leapt out the man threatening to strike him. And he retreated in alarm, thinking that it was the man whom he had driven out the day before, but at length recovered himself, and bethinking him of the closed doors, at last perceived it was the Devil, who by this sign rebuked him for what he had done to the poor man.

In the winter as he was rising to satisfy the needs of nature, being too lazy to put on the usual clothes, he clad himself in his hood only, and staying there too long caught a deadly chill. Not long after being brought near death by the swelling of the extreme parts of his body, he was in greater dread than he should have been, of the very mention of death. So crying "Ah, me!" without ceasing and with much sadness he came near his last hour. Then the sacrament being taken, and by the grace of God retained—for all other food was at once vomited up—he was labouring to set free his spirit. Meantime, in the first hour of the night, when the sacristan, a worthy man, had gone to bed, behold, he hears in the brothers' cemetery hard by a countless host of devils gathered

together. With his mind active to perceive all this, but his will-power too paralysed for speech or movement, he sees them enter the church and passing before his bed rush on between the choir and the altar and make their way to the dormitory where the sick man lay. And he with his mind's eye seeing this happen prayed to God in his spirit that he might be protected from them, knowing well that this troop had assembled for the man's death, and soon, as they reached the cell of him who was in his death agony, the brothers in attendance on him beat the board, as the custom is, to call together the other monks. Forthwith whilst they are assembling the man's dissolution takes place. Now I have related this not because I believe that he has gone to the abode of the wicked, but to remind all men to reflect with me that the prince of this world once came to the Son of God, over whom he had no power. And if to him, how much more is it certain that the rage of the Devil will in his eagerness swiftly gather his forces against us, over whom he has so much.

I saw there a woman who, in her outrageous anger with her little son, amongst other abuse which she hurled against the innocent child, with blasphemous tongue even cursed his infant baptism. Being instantly seized by a devil, she began to rave madly and to do and say horrible things. After she had been brought to the church and shown to the brothers, she was restored to her senses by prayers and exorcism, thus learning by her torment not to curse the Lord's sacraments.

I also saw there a girl possessed with a devil brought to the memorial service of St. Germer, the Confessor. She having stayed some days, was led one day by her parents to the altar. Whilst sitting near it, she

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turned her head and saw the young monks standing behind and said, "What beautiful young men, my God, but there is one among them who ought never to have lived with them." When we heard that, we wondered much what was meant by such words. Very soon afterwards one of them fled and through his death during his flight after having broken his vows, the wickedness of his life was revealed.

CHAPTER XXVI

SINCE we have begun to speak of devils, we think it fitting to add certain facts, which are a warning to avoid their incantations and the counsels of those who have dealings with them. For they admit no one to learn their magic except those whom they rob of the honour of their Christianity by a horrible sacrilege. In a certain famous monastery a monk had been brought up from childhood and had attained to some knowledge of letters. Whilst living in a cell attached to the church under the rule of his Abbot, he fell ill of a disease, through which, to his sorrow, he had occasion for talking with a Jew skilled in medicine. Gathering boldness from their intimacy, they began to reveal their secrets to one another. And so the monk, being curious about wicked arts and aware that the Jew understood magic, pressed him hard. The Jew consented and promised to be his mediator with the Devil. Time and place for a meeting are fixed. At last he is brought by his intermediary into the presence of the Devil; he asks through the other to be admitted to a share in the teaching. That abominable ruler says it can by no

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means be done, unless he denies his Christianity and offers sacrifice to him. He asked what sacrifice. "That which is pleasing in a man." "What is that?" "You shall make a libation of your seed," said he; "When you have poured that out to me, then you shall enjoy the reward of your sacrifice." Oh, crime! Oh, shameful act! And he of whom this was demanded was a priest! And this Thy ancient enemy did, O Lord, to cast the dishonour of sacrilege on Thy holy order and Thy Blessed Victim! Be not silent; restrain not Thy venegance, Lord. What shall I say? How shall I say it? The unhappy man did what was required of him, he whom Thou hadst abandoned, ah, would it had been in time! And so with that horrible libation he declares his renunciation of his faith. But let me give one instance of the magic which he learnt by this accursed bargain.

He was in the habit of having intercourse with a certain nun. Moreover he lived in a cell with one monk as his companion, who had outside duties to perform, whilst he remained at home with leisure for his wickedness. One day, therefore, they were sitting in the cell, when his companion returned from his business, and when they saw him afar off, there was no escape open to the woman, but her flight would bring her into the path of the returning monk. And so this new sorcerer, seeing his woman companion in a fright, said, "Go to meet the man as he comes, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and fear nothing." The woman trusted him and went. But he stood in the doorway and with an incantation which he had learnt, turned her into a monstrous dog. When she came near the returning monk, he said, "Ha! Whence comes this great dog?" But she

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in much fear passed him by and knew by these words under what shape she had escaped. Finally the monk coming to the house kept asking whence a dog of that size had come. "He belongs to that neighbour of ours," said he. "Have you not seen him before?" And so the other was silent, guessing the truth. Living for a long time, therefore, without God, in the end, thanks be to God, he was stricken with a severe illness, and whether he would or not, had to confess what he had done. The matter was referred to the judgment of wise men and chiefly to Anselm, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury and then Abbot of Bec. Chiefly through his advice that most filthy profaner of the divine mysteries was cast out from administering them. Thus compelled to give up celebrating them, yet nothing could clear his mind of the belief that he would ere long be made a bishop; whereas he died not a prelate, but an unfrocked priest for evermore.

I will give another instance which had a similar beginning, but a happier end. A certain clerk in the town of Beauvais lived by the art of copying, one whom I knew myself, since he did work at Ely and was engaged for this very book. Afterwards, when talking with another sorcerer at the castle of Breteuil, he was told something of this kind; "If it were made worth my while, I could teach you something by which you might get gifts of money every day without any help from man." He asks what he must do for it. The sorcerer says he must propitiate the citizen of the lower world, that is the Devil. "With what victim?" says he. "With a cock," says the other; "but the egg from which it was hatched must have been laid by the hen on Jupiter's day in the month of March. After roasting this, take it, just cooked,

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and with the spit still in it, and go to the nearest, fishpond. But whatever you hear, see, or feel there, do not dare to call upon the Blessed Mary or any of the saints." "I will do so," says he. Then a wondrous thing! They come to the place at night bringing the victim suitable for such a god. As one called on the devil and his wicked pupil held the cock, the devil in a whirlwind suddenly stood by them and seized it. Then he who had been taken there, in his fright called upon the Lady Mary. When the Devil heard the name of that powerful Lady, he fled with his cock, being unable, however, to carry it off, and it was found by some fishermen next day on an island of the fishpond. O royal, sweet name, so dreaded in the wicked regions! Now the sorcerer was angry with the clerk for calling on so great a one in such a matter. But the other was driven by repentance to Lisiard, Archdeacon of Beauvais, my uncle, a man learned in every branch, wise, courtly and well-known. And having confessed what he had done, he humbled himself, as Lisiard ordered him, to penitence and prayer. Let these instances of what I heard in the monastery, suffice. Next after speaking of the manner of my election, in the beginning of another book I will tell of the place itself to which I was translated, in what manner it was founded and of what antiquity.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

THE place is called Nogent. As a dwelling for monks it is new, but for secular purposes it has been inhabited from very ancient times. Even if this opinion is unsupported by any written tradition, it is sufficiently proved by the discovery of a number of tombs, clearly foreign, and, we believe, not Christian, in their construction. For around it and in the church itself there has accumulated from old time a great quantity of tombs and the countless number of corpses piled together is evidence of the great fame of a place so sought out. But as the graves are arranged in an order not usual with us, in a circle like a garland, many being placed round the tomb of one and in these are found certain vessels, the reason for which is unknown in Christian times, we cannot but believe that they belonged to Pagans, or are ancient Christian tombs made in the pagan fashion. Moreover, there are in the same church metrical compositions. That these are authentic I should have little justification for believing, were it not that my belief is considerably strengthened by what I have observed in recent times. Now its history is narrated in these writings as follows :

Before the assumption into heaven of the Incarnate Word, it is said that there lived a certain king among the English, who anciently were called Britons, and not English, which is a more recent name taken from a part of the Saxons, who afterwards seized their

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land. Now in this Britain, an island of the sea, lived this king, richly endowed with poesy and science and besides, by a naturally good disposition, given to works of mercy. And as he behaved generously to the poor, not through regard for God, of whom he was ignorant, but by the impulse of exceptionally humane feelings, in which he abounded, it was fitting that to the working of a good heart there should be added the gift of a clearer understanding. For he began in elaborate reasonings with himself to examine what fixed attributes he ought to expect in the many forms taken by the gods. Wondering what unity in the government of heaven and earth there could possibly be amongst those who in their marriages, whilst they lasted, practised such undoubted unchastity and brawling, and in whose earthly dominion was seen cruel hatred of one another, sons of fathers and fathers of sons, even to usurpation of power, driving out and killing one another, worse things being often told of them than of mortals, he thought it extreme madness to ascribe to them rule over the earth, much more over the heavens. And who would hand over the disposal of things on high to those whose miserable power could not control the smallest portions of the earth without disgraceful deeds?

Whilst the man pondered these and like things, shutting out of his heart the images of these vain gods, as he thought them, he turned to the worship of one incomprehensible Being, who ought to be adored under no form, who alone with single concord governs all things, whose invisible things are understood by those that are created. When, therefore, in the course of these profitable reasonings, he still hesitated in some doubt, God, who declares better things to those who wish well, sending a voice from heaven to

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him, urged the man to go to Jerusalem, where he would hear what ought to be believed about God ; how the Son of God proceeding from God lived among men for their sake and what He endured, why He died, and whom He left as His vicars behind Him to set forth His divine name, who, when he had gone there, would explain to him these great mysteries. That is to say, he was to find the Mother and all the Apostles.

This British king, therefore, giving up his possessions and his kingdom, after this declaration of faith had been delivered to him, determined to hasten to make trial of what he had learnt. And so leaving his country and having prepared a fleet, he crossed over the neighbouring sea, and passing through intervening lands containing many towns and cities, he came to the borders of the province of Laon. So in the country which we have called above Nogent, he came to get hospitality. Now that place is under the castle named Coucy, which was built to resist the invasion of foreigners by the people of the country, who were very proud and rich. The castle has no age at all. But the place of which we are speaking, was at that time surrounded by woods full of wild beasts, and by a river, the Ailette, mentioned above, of greater value than size ; for it surpasses other streams more famed in its wealth of fishes, and it is not confined within the wanderings of its channel, like other rivers, but spreads out into wide, stagnant pools like fishponds. The slopes of the mountains that rise on both sides are covered with vineyards, and the land being suitable for Bacchus, or Ceres, is praised for its soil, which produces all sorts of good crops, and its productive stream is made agreeable by its pleasant meadows stretching far and wide.

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There is an old tradition strongly vouched for, that there exists in that place a very ancient temple, not dedicated to the name or honour of any existent God, but consecrated to a woman not yet born who should bear one both God and man. It was therefore devoted to the future Mother of God yet to be born. No wise man thinks this absurd, for since they worshipped an unknown god at Athens, they were certainly aware that He would be born of a woman like their ordinary gods, whose mothers they name. And if a shrine was now dedicated to one who was to be born, His mother, like those of the others, was not likely to be deprived of a similar honour. What, therefore, is not to be discredited with regard to the birth in one place, might also happen in the other to her who was to bear a son. To this place, therefore, it chanced that the British prince came, and thankful that he had reached so pleasant a country, he arranged to rest himself and his followers there, harassed as they were by the hardships of the journey, giving the exhausted baggage animals eight days to recruit in the neighbouring pastures.

Going on from here and covering great distances by land and sea, at length he entered the walls of Jerusalem. The Saviour having recently suffered, risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, lastly the Holy Ghost being given, he found the city at variance with opposing factions, some being angered at what had happened and others rejoicing. Nor had he any difficulty in finding those whom he sought, but the great publicity that was given to the matter, made it easy to be directed to those who were spreading the new law. For so far the usual imprisonment did not stop them, nor did the fear of a rising of the Jews against them withhold them from their testimony

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to the Lord, but they found it necessary to keep in mind the great men among the nations, that the proof of their position might strengthen the authority of their teaching. Why waste words? Peter and the eleven were often found among the people, the gathering of disciples attending them being now much increased, with Mary, that mirror of all our faith and glory giving her presence there and her testimony to the divine incarnation. Addressing these, therefore, and the Virgin Mother, the British prince, who was soon to offer first-fruits to God, thus set forth the reason for his journey.

“ You see me come, Fathers and Lords, from the remotest ends of the earth to listen to you. I have till now ruled over the Britons (in the right line of succession). Now observing hitherto those ancient rites, which they through the ages of their error have regarded with veneration, I have recently abandoned them for these reasons. When I considered those whom the ages had honoured by ascribing to them divine being, reasoning it out that they were the worst of mortals and that after their monstrous abominations they had paid the debt of nature, by reasonable conjectures I discovered in the gods only men who had lived as heroes on earth, exalted above others by reputation alone, and that they could never have created the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, who certainly waxed strong in this world out of the mildness of sky and clime and the abundance of the earth. After reason, therefore, had destroyed their divinity, at last I reached a settled conviction that with these deprived of their divinity and sanction, there could be, and should be believed to exist, the one working and rule of one God only, and that as from Him all things come, so containing all things in

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Himself He rules universally. After my mind had become fixed in the idea of one God, and temples with their pretences had been rejected in scorn for ever, my heart being as it were cleansed from the filth of idolatry, there shone forth in it the purity of all true religion from on high. For soon a voice from heaven bade me come here, where in the dispensation of God the Son who has recently suffered, ye should deliver unto me the truth of the only faith. I am promised that the truth of the only faith is to be delivered to me by you. By this Mother, therefore, of the Deity declared to me, whom I see present, and by your office, I conjure you to grant me the initiation into this new birth." Hearing this, Peter and his rejoicing colleagues under Mary, who shed glory on that heavenly assembly, gave praise to the greatness of God and his human Son who had bestowed salvation freely on all the world, before the interpreters of his grace were yet scattered abroad, and had now so suddenly poured out the declaration of his new bounty to the remotest west. When, therefore, the rule of faith had been delivered to the man and he had next been washed in the water of baptism, he received the name of Quilius. Being further confirmed by the schooling of these great teachers in the understanding of that sacrament which he had received, when about to leave them and return to his own country, he begged with faithful heart for the sacred pledges of relics, that is to say, those of them which he had learnt had touched the body of the Saviour. He begged, therefore, with pious devotion for portions of the cords, by which he knew the Lord had been fastened to the Cross, of the scourges with which wicked hands had furrowed His blessed body, even of the very wood of the Cross on which He

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had hung, of that garment of the Mother of God, in which it is said she had brought forth the Lord, and of the clothing of the Apostles.

These, placed in a small casket, he bore with him, and set about returning. And after he had passed through the intervening countries, he came to that part, in which on the way there, he had stayed to rest. Forthwith, being seized by a sudden illness and having taken to his bed, there was revealed to him in a vision that in that place he had come to the end of this present life. He was also told that his body should rest in the same place as the relics which he had received from the holy apostles at Jerusalem, which, he was assured, were to be buried under the same turf. On awaking, this warning of his death turned the man's thoughts from everything else to this one subject and he busied himself with the last needs of his dead body, in the hope of the glory soon to follow. And so dying there and surrendering without loss to him that gave it, that which had been entrusted to him, under the sod that was the resting-place of his body, he gave that casket of relics a place by his side. Long afterwards, by God's care, the box was taken out and enclosed by some faithful persons in a costly shell of gold of ancient workmanship, its visible evidence descending to this age to afford fresh testimony to the truth of the old story. Now that is believed to have been the origin of that church.

CHAPTER II

AIDED by the growing strength of the Christian law, this church which, in the earliest times, had good rule,

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became under the name of the Mother of God a shining light to the world. Situated in the aforementioned town of Coucy it was closely surrounded by rich manors of great antiquity, and it became a venerated resort for crowds from the neighbouring districts. It was said also that whilst it was only a small place, it was frequently illumined by light from heaven and honoured by miracles ; rightly so indeed, since it retained its humility, so rare a thing amongst men. Moreover, the lordship of the castle itself, under flourishing chiefs, was extended far and wide, and its nobles being endowed with much wealth and generosity, determined on the advice of the devotees of the place to hand it over to monks, induced by the fame of the church, the renown of its sanctity being in good odour everywhere. Since there was no expectation that the institution would grow much larger, as there were not sufficient revenues in hand for the support of much more than six monks, an attempt was made by unskilful and uninstructed persons to extend or build anew parts of the church. And since they had no architect or instructor of any skill in the building, the work done was very defective. At an age, therefore, when there was greater abundance than there is now, their treasure chest became filled with the gifts of the castle nobility, for these lords made it the first object of their bounty, bestowing on it of their best and a similar preference was shewn by others in their offerings. Then by the counsel of the brotherhood and their patrons, very fitting measures were taken to appoint as head of the convent, Henry, at that time Abbot of the Blessed Remigius, for a long time presiding over the monastery of Homblieres, a distinguished man indeed. He was famous neither for learning nor birth, but his

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pre-eminent qualities in the management of worldly business were equalled by the zeal of his godly care for the maintenance of its internal discipline. Presiding, therefore, over these three monasteries, from the abundance of the two richer ones he supplied the needs of the third, which was beginning to thrive. By the great liberality which he shewed towards that church, he made a rich occasion of its consecration, the church being dedicated by Helinandus, Bishop of Laon, a man abounding in wealth which he used in the foundation of churches, and very zealous in their adornment, and it was enriched by him with many privileges and by others with exemption from dues and splendid gifts.

But as this Abbot was of advanced age and had weak eyes, he devoted himself to the richer ones which could easily be governed by his own powers ; the third, which could not be administered without toilsome strain, he decided to relinquish. And when he was arranging to entrust it to a nephew monk, and had invited the brothers in the church to do this, he failed to get what he wanted, but the choice (to the annoyance of the Abbot) fell on one who was then a young man, named Godfrey, a native of those parts and formerly a monk at le Mont St. Quintin, near Perona. When, therefore, he saw that the votes of the electors were being given to another man, he abandoned the place, which he had most worthily and with indulgent generosity maintained, and made legal surrender of it to him whom they had chosen.

After his election and advancement to the charge of that place, as he behaved with great caution and the people and nobles alike had both the will and the power to enrich the churches, much wealth in lands and revenues subsequently poured into this one.

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For the man knew how to adapt himself to the manners of the outside world, being courteous and liberal in his dealings with others and in the management of their legal business, in the details of which he spent much care on their behalf. And in fact at the time of which I spoke at the beginning of this book, men with a generous desire to found monasteries bestowed on them lands and money, spending their substance on such works more freely and gladly than their sons favour us now with good words. Since, therefore, in the monasteries lying around there was less zeal for religion than there should have been, whereas he and his monks seemed to be busy with such matters, as a tiny light in the midst of darkness, so the times were such as to throw a favourable light on the governing powers of the rulers and the obedient submission of the ruled, when compared with the same in other institutions.

And so he forbade any simony in that church in act or thought and debarring all purchase, admitted influence only, regarding the fact or name of such disgraceful barter as an accursed thing. And so since this man was considered shrewder than most of his abbots in legal business and was therefore better known in towns and cities, first there was talk of one of the richer abbacies for him and later measures were taken to get him a bishopric. At that time the Bishopric of Amiens had been vacant for nearly two years. Now, he had himself put forward as candidate an archdeacon of that city, whose election was desired by a certain party of the clergy and people. Then his worldly shrewdness and the fact that he was a monk, brought a demand for his own election, whilst seeking it for another, and under Richard, formerly the Bishop of Autil and now a

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legate of the Apostolic See in France at the time, who had summoned a Council at Troyes, he was appointed Bishop of Amiens and translated from Nogent.

There, at the height of his fame and success, in such general esteem that even the prelates who ranked above him, regarded him with special respect, and, to be brief, everywhere venerated as the mirror of all religion, he suddenly attained either his desire or his dread, God knows which. But I have learnt that an inheritance eagerly desired at the outset, in the end may prove no blessing. His earlier career was attended with the usual plaudits and for years his fame had been his herald, but now it seemed that the bright flame of the man's splendour burned low and was even extinguished. When on the first day of his reception in the city he used an elevated place for a pulpit to address the people, he declared that in like manner he would always scale the heights, since he was unwilling that the words of the poet should ever be aptly applied to his failure :

"The mountains are in labour—an absurd little mouse shall be born."

These words, true prophecy of what would follow, sank into the minds of all. For his reputation, beginning rapidly to decline without any check to its decay, soon proved his performance to be far lower than his promise. But let us say no more of that, as I intend perhaps later. . . .

CHAPTER III

INTO the place which he left, filled by him with such capability and fitness, where, had he been content

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with what he had, he might have gone on living in the greatest happiness and independence, to this, as I said above, it was my lot to be chosen. Whether my election was against the will or by the suffrance of God, I know not ; this only I fearlessly declare that neither by influence nor with my knowledge, nor through the power of my kinsfolk was the office sought for me. But however well the matter went in that respect, yet herein, that I was unknown to any of them and they to me, perhaps it was not so fortunate or right, as the reader of what follows, may think. For in coming to them I am not certain myself that, being a stranger to them and they to me, we might not have taken a dislike to one another for that very reason. Some people did think so. This in other circumstances has happened and may happen, but that it did in this case is not a matter for conjecture. Now no one can doubt that acquaintance with a man and familiarity are wont to breed boldness, and boldness easily breaks out into rashness. And certainly we are wont to shew greater respect for those we do not know ; still, when I entered upon that office, they by no means hid from me their innermost feelings, but by faithful confession so much did they reveal their hearts and by revealing them become one with me, that I who thought I had seen good monks elsewhere, had never known any to be compared with them in this respect.

Thou knowest, most merciful God, that I began this work not in the spirit of pride, but wishing to confess my wickedness, which I would most plainly acknowledge did I not fear to corrupt the minds of many of my readers by my horrible acts. I confess, I say, my wickedness and much more rightly Thy mercy that answered to the call not of my iniquity but of Thy

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grace within me. And if I happen to speak of anyone, I will set forth his character to shew Thy judgments and the final issues ; for Thou knowest that in these works that are Thine and dedicated to Thee, I do not with pleasure utter words of defamation and hatred. Because, therefore, I have taken in hand to tell the tale of my fortunes and misfortunes for the help, it may be, of others, on the very day of my installation, a monk with a good knowledge of the divine page, and curious, I suppose, about my future, when they were preparing to meet me in procession, purposely opened the Gospels on the altar, meaning to take the first chapter that met his eye as an omen concerning me.

Now the book had been written by hand, not in pages but columns. In the middle, therefore, of the third column, his eye fixed on the passage which ran as follows : " The light of thy body is thine eye." And so he tells the deacon who was to carry the Gospel before me in the procession, after kissing the silver image attached to the cover, to put his finger between the pages at the place which he had marked and suddenly opening the volume before me to note carefully where my look fell. He opened the book, therefore, on the outside of which he had, according to custom pressed his lips, and whilst he was guessing where my glance would fall I looked neither at the beginning nor the end of the page, but fixed my eyes steadily on that very verse. The monk who had guessed that this would be so and had seen me unwittingly do as he had expected, some days afterwards came and told me both what he had done and how my prompting had been wonderfully in harmony with his. O God, who lightest the lamp of all that believe in Thee, Thou knowest how Thou didst bestow

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on me the light of motive and how amid the troubles brought on me, my will towards them is good. And although through my fault, as far as depends on me, my heart is foul and wretched, yet Thou art not ignorant how much my soul yearns for the wellbeing of those whom Thou didst put under me. In such measure as I think on my evils, so much am I cheered by the good that has smiled upon their works. For I know that I have the freer access to the throne of Thy grace, in so far as I have shewn myself gracious to the desires of men of goodwill.

Being instituted, therefore, by them and brought before the assembled chapter, I preached a sermon on that prophetic passage and as it was the Sunday in Christmas week when Isaiah is read, I said: "Isaiah the prophet said what you have just heard, 'A man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand: And he shall answer: I am not a healer and in my house there is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people. For Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen.' He is a man who is not timid in the face of the Devil. He takes hold of his brother, when he unites himself to one born of God. That one ought also to be of the house of his father, because he who is taken for the office of a pastor ought not to be found ignorant of the mysteries of the house of God. For he who knoweth not the sacraments of the church is unworthy of its administration, because, that is, 'a scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven,' 'faithful' also in preserving its mysteries, 'prudent' in expenditure, cannot be ranked as a 'servant.' And how shall he preside over the church, who knows not the church? Therefore let him be of the house.

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“What is meant by clothing but the fine dress of outward works? Therefore let him be demanded for ruler, who hath clothes; because oft-times it befalls that he is sought for rule, who by his gait, by word and deed, shows his self-control. It is forbidden, too, that ruin should be under his hand, because whatever hurt there may be among the ruled is discerned as coming into the reckoning of the ruler. As if he were to say, ‘Thou seemest to be fair to the eye, yet see by what merit thou art pre-eminent within.’ Knowing in particular that you must hold up all from falling, and hence becoming more cautious, he brings in this, ‘I am not,’ says he, ‘a healer that I may have power to resist the growing ruin of disease.’ You are looking at the outer garment, that which is not within the house, because there is not the same dress of the mind as there is of the body. Hence he confesses he is not a healer; for it is difficult to penetrate to the causes and effects of any vice or virtue by the keenness of the discernment. And this might be the result of poverty because that there is not in the house the daily bread of him who is to-day sought from God, the comfort of that divine refreshment which is spiritually poured in, or the strengthening of that love in the inner man, without which there is nowhere good rule.

“And so he rightly refuses to be made ruler, whose spirit gives him no strength through inspiration from on high. ‘For Jerusalem is in ruins’; that is, the experience of inner peace has perished. Also ‘Judah has fallen’; that is, the confession of sin after the loss of inward calm has broken down in utter despair, the worst of all evils, and a good reason in itself for refusing the office of pastor. For where the mind is disquieted by the appearance of vices, the attack on

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it is passing foul, nor does the mind when evilly blinded by these, forswear them by confession and when it has no strength to rule itself, it is rightly prevented by others, more rightly by itself, from ruling over other men." Thus I spoke to them, now explaining, now rather using exhortation, and again adducing Scripture to support the argument.

CHAPTER IV

BUT since I have for some time said nothing about my mother, who was far the best of all my earthly possessions, it is right that I should briefly touch upon a good life's better end. Being now come, as she herself admitted, to no little age, with the strength of her spirit unbroken and, as her body became enfeebled, her love of prayer never growing less, getting no sleep through the weakness of her lungs, and yet with a voice wonderfully strong repeating the name of Jesus Christ in the night, at last overcome by disease, she took to her bed. Now I and my brother at that time were staying at Nogent, two years, if I am not mistaken, before that return to Ely, which I have mentioned above, an ill-considered act indeed, but one which by the power of Him who uses our misfortunes for good, turned to a much happier issue than could have been believed; for God spared her weakness, that the heart which loved God so well, might not undeservedly be hurt by the sword of that ignominious return.

When she, therefore, was at the point of death and my master sat weeping by her side, he said, "Behold, the sons of my lord are gone and thou perhaps wilt be grieved and find it harder to die in their absence."

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But she, giving him a reproachful look, said, " Even if they had remained as before within the neighbouring cloister, God knows I should have wished neither these nor any other of my kin to be present at my death. There is one however, whom I desire with all the strength of my soul ; may he alone be present ! " So she spake and that night, at the hour when the sending of the angel Gabriel is sung and celebrated, she departed to that Lady of hers aforesaid, whom with unbounded love she passionately desired, to be received, we believe, with a glad welcome.

A few years before her death she conceived a strong desire to take the sacred veil. When I tried to dissuade her, putting forward as authority the passage where it is written, " Let no prelate attempt to veil widows," saying that her most chaste life would be sufficient without the external veil, as Anselm, too, Abbot of Bec, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury in England, had of old time forbidden, yet so much the more was she inflamed and by no reasoning could be driven from her resolve. So she prevailed, and when taking the veil in the presence of John, the Abbot of that place, gave satisfactory reasons for this act, and in the end she proved that in this matter she had received an impulse, as follows :

She said that she had seen in a vision a lady of great beauty and authority, having about her an abundance of ornaments, who offered to her a costly dress, as though entrusting it to her for safe keeping, like a deposit, to be repaid again at the proper time. On hearing this tale we all without hesitation agreed, the more because we knew her consecration was invited by signs from heaven. This holy veil for nearly three years she faithfully guarded to the best of her powers and carried it back to that Lady who had entrusted

it to her on the day when she joyously heard the omen of the message of salvation. To the prayers of all faithful people who read these words, I commend her who from her own constant prayers certainly never excluded any of the faithful. This then is what I have said of her, as in the presence of God, with the true testimony of my heart, inventing, I say, not a single thing. But because we have made a journey to the church of Ely, it is right that we should stay a little while before retracing our footsteps in the sands of Laon.

CHAPTER V

IN the monastery there was a monk who was a Jew by birth. When the beginning of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem began to be bruited throughout the Latin world, he was thus rescued from his superstition. On a certain day when the people of Rome who had joined in that expedition under the badge of the cross, began to complain to one another, "We, after traversing great distances towards the East, desire to attack the enemies of God there. But this is wasted labour, since before our eyes there are Jews, of all races the worst foes of God." Saying this and seizing their weapons, they herded them into a certain church, driving them in either by force or guile, and without discrimination of sex or age put them to the sword, but allowed those who accepted Christianity to escape slaughter. During this massacre a certain nobleman, seeing a little boy, rescued him and took him to his mother.

She was a lady of high worth, formerly the wife of the Count of Eu. Eu is the castle on which looks the

abbey of St. Michel by the sea called Treport. This excellent woman, therefore, receiving the child in a kindly way, asked him if he would like to come under Christian law. And when he did not refuse, thinking that otherwise he would certainly be put to death like his people, they hastily made the necessary preparations for baptism and came to the font. After the holy words had been said and he had received the sacrament, when they came to the part where a candle is lighted and the melted wax is dropped on the water, a drop of it was seen to fall separately all by itself, taking the shape of a tiny cross on the water so exactly in its minute substance that no human hand could have so fashioned it with so little. This the Countess told me herself, being a friend exceptionally well-known to me, always calling me son, and the priest too, both solemnly protesting by God that the tale was true. I should have treated the incident less seriously had I not seen without any doubt the remarkable progress of the boy. Now the name of the countess was Helisandis. Her son who rescued him and stood godfather to him, was named William; therefore he gave his name to the boy who had thus come to him.

When he was a little older, he was transferred from the Hebrew language in which he had been first taught, to Latin with which he soon became familiar. And being afraid he might be recovered by his family (for they had long tried without success) and returned to his earlier condition, he entered the monastery of Ely. Being now given over to the monastic life, such love did he shew for Christianity, with such keenness of mind did he drink in all divine knowledge, with such calm did he endure all that was put upon him by way of discipline, that the victory over his

wicked nature and his former turbulent spirit drew from all the greatest respect. Now he had chosen as his secret guardian, whilst a boy, a teacher of grammar, who being a very religious man, and considering that a knowledge of our law was necessary to the youth, took pains in teaching him which were well rewarded. For his naturally acute intellect was so sharpened daily that among the distinguished circle of men there, there was not one who was thought to shew greater distinction of understanding. Able as he was in thought, and therefore no envier or back-biter, his manners were always cheerful and of special purity. To increase the strength of his unbroken faith, I sent to him a little treatise, which about four years before I had written against the Count of Soissons, a Judaizer and a heretic, with which, I hear, he was so delighted that he matched my work with a compilation on Reasons for the Faith. Therefore the cross at his baptism seems to have been formed not by chance, but by Providence, as a sign of the acceptance of our faith by a man of Jewish race, which was most unusual at that time.

Another, a noble of Beauvais, advanced in years and worn out in body, having—what is deadly for such men—a wife with more vigour for married life, abandoned both his wife and the world, and professed himself a monk here. By persistence in almost unceasing tears and endless prayers, always present at the hearing of God's word, he made himself respected by all of us. Being eager to keep the rule strictly, and hearing at the chapter meeting that no one was allowed to enter the cells of the cloistered infirm, where he was living, he kept carefully in mind the order that had been given. And behold, one morning as he lay half asleep with his eyes closed, two devils

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in the shape of that religious sect vulgarly called Deonandi, sat down on the bench which stood near the bed. Awaking, the old man turned his eyes to the head of the bed and wondered at its being occupied in such familiar fashion by strange people. Now, one who sat there had his head uncovered, a short beard and red tonsured hair ; his feet were bare as is usual in wandering friars, with straw sticking between his toes, so he said, as if he had been walking on straw. But the other was so hidden behind the first that his features could not be made out, but he had a habit reaching to his feet and on it a black hood.

And so, seeing these unknown persons in his presence, he accosted them in great anger, " Since ye are laymen and strangers, how can ye have the impudence to come at this hour into this place, where no cloistered monk would dare to come without strong reason ? "

But the man replied : " I have heard, master, that there are religious in this monastery and I came to learn their religion. Prithee, be not angry." " The religion and the rule," said he, " are not learnt here, but if you wish to be taught, go to those who are in the cloister. There you will find the vigour of its discipline and the rudiments of holiness. Away with you hence, therefore ! for the place which even the monks may not enter is much more surely closed against you."

And when the man was going to repeat what he had said, and to stay all the same, he broke out on them in still more thundering accents and compelled them to leave the cell. But when they came to the door, they halted on the threshold, and looking back on the old man, the one who was the leader in speaking, again said :

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“I would rather you should drive me out, but certainly, if you had been willing to keep me with you, there is one of your people who is guilty of theft, and if he dared to deny it, I would challenge him to battle and thereby bring you much profit.” When he heard this the old man laughed gently and said, “Now we have certain proof from your talk, for whilst telling me you came here for religion’s sake, you admit you are a fighter. Therefore for your lies you deserve neither to be heard nor to be kept here.” Furthermore the old man, much annoyed that such men had been admitted into the house, rises and goes as far as the porch, and finding there infirm brothers who lived with him, hotly rebuked them for allowing such strange men to enter. But they in wonder, and believing him to be raving, declared they had seen no one. And when he told them who the men were, how they had behaved and what they had said, fixing the time as well, then he discovered from his own and their testimony that he had been deceived by devils. For there are some devils intent on mockery only, whilst others have some cruel intention and are hurtful, of which we now give two cases as illustrations, although irrelevant to our purpose.

CHAPTER VI

At the castle of Chauny, there was belonging to the household of Guesclin, the lord of the castle, a certain servant, whose duty it was to act as sentinel to guard the castle at night. He, in the evening, when it was growing dark, being afraid he would lose his supper, which was now due, and being on the other side of the river, shouted out for a boat to be brought by

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someone to the further bank. And when no one paid any attention to him, getting into a rage, the man said, "You devils, then, why do not you take me across?" At once a devil appears saying, "Come aboard, I will take you." Thereupon the unhappy man to his misfortune went aboard. Within an hour of taking him, the devil brought him down in Italy in the outskirts of a township called Subura with such goodwill that he broke his head. Now the township is about a day's journey on this side of the city of Rome and the man's lord on a visit to the home of the Apostles had left the city the day before and stayed for the night at Subura. He arose just before dawn, as is usual with travellers in winter, and coming with his people to the country of the township, heard not far from the high road some one groaning. Search is made, the man is found and recognised by his voice alone, because he spoke the same language as his lord. Being asked how he came there, he told them that he had been recently at Chauny, and how he had been carried away by the devil and had fallen down there. The lord being more than a little surprised, took the man to the nearest township and paid money from his own purse for his hurt to be tended and as provision for his return. From what he had suffered, this man learnt and taught others that God and not devils must be invoked to do anything.

There was also a man at St. Medard, performing the same office in the abbey. Having passed a part of the night over the tower gate on the side of the fishpond, springing rattles, singing out and blowing on a horn, as watchmen do, at last he went down to walk about on the edge of the fishpond. And as he stood there, there appeared the forms of three women, one

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of whom said in his hearing, "Let us enter into this man." And another replied, "He is poor and could not feed us very well." Then the third said, "There is a clerk here called Hugo, gross and fat, with an abundance of everything, who would easily support us ; it would be well to attack him."

On their vanishing into thin air, the man recovered his senses and perceived that they were three of the common sorts of fevers which with droll nicety despised him, as a poor man, and made for him who would not quickly be drained dry of his flesh and substance. Without waiting, therefore, for the morning, he goes to the nearest monks he can find, and telling them what he had seen and heard, asks to be taken to the said Hugo to see how he was. He is taken, and Hugo is found in high fever. Hence it is conjectured that such kinds of sickness are by the judgment of God administered by devils. And so too the woman in the Gospel, bent double for eighteen years, is said to have been bound by Satan. Also he who suffered from epilepsy, that is, the falling sickness, is said to have been dashed upon the ground by a foul spirit, to groan and gnash with his teeth and to lose his senses, which it is asserted, can only be cured with prayer and fasting. Job also was assailed by the enmity of devils within and without, that is, in body and substance.

Who can stop when he once begins a tale ? Let me finally put in writing a fourth case, which I can remember. A certain clerk, who became a fearful warning for our times, lived at Rheims, a fair scholar and with some skill in painting. Becoming afraid because of the many frivolities in which he had been engaged, he was made a regular canon of Chalons-sur-meme in the church of All Saints. Living there

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for some time and losing every day some of his first fervour, as the heat of his early emotion grew cold, he abandoned the rule which he had accepted, returned to Rheims and married a wife. After begetting of her several children, he was stricken with a disease sent by God for his correction. Yet before he was prostrate with this illness, he had the intention of following the expedition to Jerusalem, which was at that time wonderfully bruited.

And being very sick of a long illness, as his discomfort grew worse, he returned to his senses, and addressing entreaties to John, the Abbot of St. Nicasius at that time, begged him to come to him, promising renunciation of the world and demanding to be indued with the holy habit. This abbot being clear-sighted and suspicious through experience of the man's lightness of character, put him off, and whilst refusing to give him the habit which he desired, yet had him carried, sick as he was, within the pale of the monastery. He, feeling his disorder becoming worse, assails the Abbot with repeated complaints and induces him against his will to grant him the standing of a monk. Glad at getting his wish for a very brief space he seemed to be unusually peaceful. Then suddenly under some impulse from God summoning the Abbot he said, "Bid your monks have close charge of me, Father ; for be assured that in a few days the manifest judgment of God is coming upon me. You indeed and your monks will be much troubled by me, but knowing it will not be for long, prithee, be not concerned." Hearing this the Abbot ordered resolute and watchful men to be chosen to watch him. Soon swarms of devils rushed upon him from all quarters, tearing him and dragging him prostrate over the floor and striving with mad vio-

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lence to pluck from him his holy habit, whilst he held on to the hood with his teeth and tied the arms to prevent its being torn off. And after being in distress with this dreadful misery and uttering pitiful cries, mostly at night, but sometimes in the day, when they left him, he was allowed to rest for a little while. Then he could be plainly questioned how in that stormy business it went with him. Thereupon he spoke much about the spirits of men he had known and whom they suggested as being present, as though he saw them quite clearly.

A certain widow hearing about this, who was in fear for the peril of her husband's soul and was not praying for him, consulted him whether she might pray for her husband and whether he knew how he fared. And he said, "Why not? Pray fearlessly for him; for a little while ago he was here." Being delivered up to these torments, therefore, for many days, at last he was restored to peace. For although at times there seemed to be a pause in his sufferings, yet presently there would burst forth from the walls, the ground and every place crowds of demons, who would rush on him to tear him asunder. At last after the evil spirits had been driven off and when the mercy of God's judgment had been granted to him, he called for the Abbot and thus spoke to him, "See, Lord Abbot, God gives me acquittal of my sins: be sure, therefore, that after this judgment my end will quickly follow. Grant me therefore such absolution for my wrongdoing as thou canst and anoint me with the sacred oil to crown its remission." This the Abbot did quickly and with devotion; and he receiving it lovingly and gratefully, having by punishment in this world wiped away all stain of sin, passed free and joyful through death and entered into life.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

As I am now going to tell the story of the people of Laon, or rather to put on the stage the tragedy of Laon, I must first trace the source in my opinion of all the trouble to the wrongdoing of the prelates. To their work, which went on far too long, we must add, they say, what was done by Ascelin, also called Adalbero. He, we find, was a native of Lotharingen, having much wealth in goods and lands, who sold up everything and taking huge sums of money to the see over which he presided, adorned his church with exceedingly fine furniture and much increased the prosperity of the church and the diocese, but marred all those benefits by his surpassing wickedness. For what could be more wicked or a greater disgrace to himself than the betrayal of his lord the king, an innocent boy, to whom he had taken an oath of fealty, and his diversion of the current of royal descent to the foreign line of Charles the Great? This crime, like Judas, he committed on the day of our Lord's Supper. In the overthrow of the reigning monarch and his descendants, he certainly did not foresee at the time the usefulness of the change, but only the fulfilment of his wicked will on the innocent. Yet none the less on that account did prosperity in temporal matters attend the city and the city's ruler, God putting off the day of punishment.

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CHAPTER II

Now Helinandus, a man of quite a poor family and humble origin, no scholar and of mean person, through his acquaintance with Walter, the old Count of Pontoise, from whose district he came, won the favour of Edward, the King of England, whose wife had some sort of connection with that count, and he became the king's chaplain partly because he had some French culture. The English King often made him his envoy to Henry, the French king. From that king, who was very avaricious and given to selling bishoprics, by lavish bribes in the form of presents, he obtained a promise that on the death of any French bishop he should succeed to the pontifical insignia. For in his position as chaplain to the king and queen, abounding in wealth as England did at that time, he accumulated huge mountains of money, and therefore when the said opportunity of bribery favoured him, he gained the ear of King Henry. And so it fell out : and being installed at Laon, as he knew he would have no influence through respect for his birth or his learning, he placed his hopes on his wealth, of which he had a great sufficiency and which he had learnt to distribute with much tact, and on his agreeable manners.

And so he gave himself up to the embellishment and building of churches, and whilst seeming to do much for God's glory, he gave indisputable proof that he was only seeking men's esteem and the spread of his own fame by those good works. By such artfulness did he get possession of the Archbishopric of Rheims, which he obtained after its great revenues had been squandered for two years under King Philip, a man most mercenary in what belonged to

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God, and he then received word from the Lord Pope that anyone having one wife could by no means take another. To some one asking plainly the meaning of that, he said that if he could also become Pope he would certainly not be secret about it.

Now whatever he was in himself in respect of self-seeking or any other human passions, honour is certainly due to him for having splendidly guarded the liberty of the Church and for his advancement both of the See and the churches attached to it, through his generous bounty. And it was right that wealth should flow in to him to be expended on the embellishment of the Dominican houses.

CHAPTER III

AFTER him Enguerrand succeeded, who surpassed the aforesaid bishop both in birth and learning, but in guarding the rights of the Church he was very poor in comparison with the other. For certain revenues of the bishop, of which royal violence had at one time robbed that See, had been extracted from King Philip by Helinandus himself with entreaties and gifts and their restoration had been confirmed by the king's letters and seal ; but this man on his entry, to his own ruin, gave back everything to the king, and during the rule of the three succeeding bishops they have been lost to the church and perhaps will be for ever. Hence in my opinion he has made parties to this simony all succeeding bishops, who shall take up the office with such fear of the king as to shrink from demanding restitution of that which he to his damnation gave for being made bishop. For being bereft of all love for God he made a mockery of privation, and the

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religious rules, openly indulging in foolish prating and wanton talk, worse than any jester or dancer, and in his day began to arise occasion for the destruction of that city and its churches and the whole province, with issues far from happy.

Now a certain man with the same surname, Enguerrand, that is, of Boves, closely related to him, was very liberal, bountiful and agreeable, treating the churches with very great respect and munificence, those at least where he knew religion was observed, but, on the other hand, so abandoned in his love of women, that he kept all sorts, bondwomen and harlots, about him and hardly did anything except at the dictation of their wantonness. Now being most unlucky in his matrimonial fortunes and beginning to stray amongst other men's wives, he secretly possessed himself of the wife of his kinsman, the Count of Namur, and the woman whom he had tempted in secret, he then united to himself openly in marriage. This union, condemned by many an anathema and declared accursed by the protests of councils, they would both have readily renounced on the approach of shame, had not the relationship of the husband and the craft of the woman's flatteries softened the bishop. This gentleness so far encouraged their adulterous embraces, as to give secret absolution for a tie that had been made in the face of the world and publicly excommunicated. Oh, shame! Surely those to whom he falsely gave assurance of absolution never dared to consider themselves absolved.

Meantime, since out of the serpent's root cometh forth a cockatrice, evils, that is, by nursing, break forth into something worse, who shall say with what slaughter the man robbed of his wife raged against the county of Porcien? She was the daughter of

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Roger, Count of Porcien, and his youngest child. He, setting aside his sons and daughters, begotten of a wife of much nobler birth, and excluding them from inheritance as the firstborn on the demand of the stepmother, married this daughter of a mother of mean birth to the Rotheringian of Namur, that is, Count Godfrey, and with her went to his own county. Now when her husband was engaged with certain of his enemies in Lotharingia, his wife, by his orders, stayed at Tournus, at the castle of Porcien. And when less attention than her due was paid to her by her husband, whether she would otherwise have shewn restraint, one cannot tell ; but she would never have fallen into such manifest and monstrous shame, had there not been a gradual descent through hidden acts of wickedness, especially as she had come to her present husband already pregnant by intercourse with another. For the notoriety of her past lasciviousness was such with all who knew her that we are ashamed to mention or even to remember them.

Now this Godfrey was a young man of exceeding beauty, but Enguerrand to whom she went was advanced in years. Therefore there began to rage between the two such a mad war, that all of Enguerrand's followers captured by the Lotharingian were either hanged on the gallows or had their eyes put out or their feet cut off. That is plainly apparent to-day to anyone visiting Porcien. I have certainly heard from one who was present at such an execution, that about twelve men taken in this war were raised to the gallows in one day. For some of the foremost men in Porcien were agents in this removal and principals too, who have therefore become infamous in life and death. Thus Venus, untouched by the fires of Vulcan, passed on to Mars; the heat of lust, that is, threw off the

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froth of cruelty. Who can tell of the plunderings, the burnings, that broke out on all sides and the other things that such a storm is wont to beget, so monstrous that they strike dumb those who would relate them.

And so the Lord Bishop in his madness gave absolution to that devilish union. Much that might be told of episcopal morals were better left unsaid, but in him one fact stands out, that by no realisation of his sin did he shew his penitence before God. At last, affected by bodily weakness, and yet by that weakness no more withdrawn from his folly, paralysis came upon him and so suddenly was he wrapped in the shadow of death, that he was unable to speak rationally, and confession, anointing and the sacrament were forcibly thrust upon him by the care of others, nor was his consent asked. And now when speech and sight were almost swimming in death, Enguerrand came, whom he had bound to him by his wicked absolution, and whom the clergy had shut out of the house as an excommunicated man until the anointing was finished, and addressing him with tears said, "Lord Bishop, see, here is Enguerrand your kinsman." And he, although he had not been conscious enough to ask to be confessed and anointed or to take the sacrament, threw his arm round the man's neck and drew him forward to kiss him. Thereat all were scandalised and afterwards nothing came from his lips but the ravings of delirium until his last breath. The very woman for whose love he had done that, often told this publicly as an example that the evil which he had done in his lifetime was also the goal of his career in death. Behold, thus do the heavens reveal the iniquities of some, so that the earth rises up against them and they displease those very persons whom they seek to gratify by foul means.

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CHAPTER IV

AFTER his death in this manner, when the bishopric had been vacant for two years, at last we met together to choose a successor. Amongst those present was the same Enguerrand, who, when the former bishop was rejected by the king because of his frivolity, had by his appeal to the king obtained his election. It was plain that he was using every effort of his influence to obtain the election of one who would be under his hand. One who had the favour of the king and the clergy as a candidate, would not for that reason dare to oppose his marriage. To the ruin, therefore, of the city and of the whole province they chose a certain Gaudry, recommended by the King of England, who by report was rich in silver and gold.

Before this election, two archdeacons of the church had been chosen for the chair by contending parties of supporters, namely Walter and Ebal. But they were unseated by the decision of the Apostolic See. For Walter had always been more of a soldier than a clerk; the other was incontinent with women. When these had been rejected, a third bright light of the Church who wished to thrust himself upon them, approached the court and, under colour of wishing to plead for another, drew the recommendations of the priesthood upon himself. Why do I go on? He bargains to give the king great presents. Swollen with pride he grasps at the hope and promise of wealth, but not wealth itself. Returning home he was expecting his installation by the royal deputies on the following Sunday, but behold, God (who puts snares before such men and casts them down when they are uplifted), struck at the proud man with a

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deadly disease, and, dying, he was placed in the church on the day when he thought he would receive his installation from the clergy and people. After he had been placed there, I have been told, wind broke from the body and a great flood of evil stench pervaded the place as far as the middle of the choir. But let me return to the point where I digressed.

The aforesaid person being chosen by the clergy in a vain hope of profit, by the efforts of Enguerrand in the first place with the aid of the rest to their own harm, request for his election is made by the King of England at the court contrary to canon law. He, although by no means doubtful of the man's election, because he had no title from any church and had been admitted to no holy orders except those of a clerk, used his influence to have him made a sub-deacon and to procure him a canonry in the church of Rouen, although up to this time he had lived the life of a soldier only. When all, therefore, had given their assent to his election, Master Anselm, the light of all France, ay, of the whole Latin world in learning and serenity of character, alone opposed it. He, on certain information, was aware of his character, whereas we were unwillingly supporting a stranger. There were some of us, it is true, who did not approve of him, but amongst the others cowards who followed the lead of our powerful rulers.

Being accepted, therefore, and coming in to the city with empty pomp, not long after he begged me to go with him to Rome. The Abbot of St. Vincent, Adalberon, a native of Soissons, a good scholar, with the Abbot of Remiremont, also not unlearned, and myself, junior to them both in knowledge and years, he induced to go with him, paying the expenses himself. Setting out, therefore, and arriving at

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Langres, we were informed that the Lord Pope Pascal had just before left Rome and was drawing near to the borders of that diocese. In that town we stayed eight days.

And when the Lord Pope had come to Dijon, the clergy of Laon, a great number of whom the bishop-elect had brought with him, go out to meet the Pope and plead the cause of their elect before him in the castle where he was staying. With many to tell him, the Pope was soon acquainted with the facts and promised to act in accordance with the wishes of his petitioners. Now their plea was that he had been duly elected, if the other charges made by Anselm and conveyed to the ears of the Pope were withdrawn. But the Pope's palace advisers, discovering how wealthy the man was, made themselves agreeable to him and flattered him. For it is the way of the world to become pleasant on the mention of gold.

The Pope, therefore, being received into the city, dealt next day with the matter of our choice. And after I had read before him the report on the election in which more than enough was said about his life and character, the Pope summoning us Abbots, who were present, and certain priests of the church who had come with the bishop-elect, began to address us, taking for his subject the report of the election brought to him. Now the assembly was full of very distinguished persons, Italian bishops and our own, besides cardinals, and other very learned men. The Pope then first asked why we had chosen a stranger. As none of the priests made any reply to that (for hardly any of them knew the rudiments of Latin), he turned to the Abbots. Now I was sitting between the other two. They remaining silent when addressed, began on either side to urge me to speak,

and I, my youth making me abashed, and afraid to be branded with rashness in a place and matter of such consequence, was with difficulty induced to open my mouth. Now the question was not debated in the mother tongue but in the language of the learned. Therefore I said, with much blushing within and without, what I thought fitting in reply to his question. In careful phrases I expressed myself with moderate warmth and not deviating very far from the truth, that we had not an intimate personal knowledge of the man, but had accepted as true the testimony of others who had spoken of him with goodwill. And when he had attempted to weaken that statement by adducing the testimony of the Gospel, "He who hath seen, hath given witness," and had raised the objection, but not in very plain terms, that he had been elected from the king's court, I, putting away all evasion, admitted that I could not refute his words. With that he was much pleased. For he was less learned than he should have been in his office. Then when I saw that my indirect defence in reply to his first question carried little weight, although I had much pleased him by it, I passed on to the pressing need of the church and replied briefly to the objection that his personal qualities were not suitable for the bishopric.

Finally, he asked what orders he had, and I replied that he was a sub-deacon. Then he enquired in what church he had served, whereat I hesitated, fearing to lie, but it was suggested by my fellow-abbots that it was in the church of Rouen. To this, however, I added truly that it was recently. Lastly, he asked whether he was of legitimate birth. He had clearly been told he was a bastard. On that head, as I was more certain than on other points and spoke without hesitation, the Pope said, "Do you bring proof of

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this ? ” And I said, “ On the other points I am silent, but on this I confidently affirm that he is neither bastard nor base-born.” This objection the Pope, as we have said, withdrew. But the reason why he raised these points one after the other, was not to prevent his appointment, but because Anselm, who had made the charges against him, was present, so that what he had said privately, he might have the opportunity to bring up before the man’s face.

But the Master having seen more deeply into the corruption of the palace party (I do not say of the Lord Pope), thought it a difficult matter to wrest the club from the hand of Hercules ; therefore the great scholar, seeing the lords relying on the Lord Pope and myself, if I may dare to say so in jest, omitted to give any direct contradiction. And so the debate fell to the ground, the bishop-elect was brought forward, and the Pope’s permission for his appointment granted. The meeting therefore having broken up and the Pope being gone, a group of cardinals approached me with great warmth saying, “ Your speech gave us much pleasure.” Which pleasure, Thou knowest, my Lord God, arose not so much from the fineness of my speech as from the very good hope they had of money, with which he had come stuffed. For both I and my fellow-Abbot, Adalbero of St. Vincent, were each of us carrying twenty pounds of that money, with which perhaps the wide gape of their expectations was filled, and for that reason they were glad to back him and his backers.

Lastly, when they were gone, the Pope’s chamberlain, Peter, a monk of Cluny, who had made his acquaintance at Rouen, when the King of England asked for his election, secretly accosted me with these words, “ Since the Lord Pope has accepted your

recommendation of the person you desire, and has graciously listened to you, you should henceforth suggest to your Bishop-elect that he obey the commands of the Lord Pope in all things and yield to him in his diocese, so that, if need arise, he may willingly listen to your requests, whether for him or for others." See the honey smeared over the lip of the poisonous cup ! For what could be better than to obey the admonitions of the Pope, what worse than to be corruptly obsequious to men for the favours granted by God ? I was much horrified at being made the go-between in such a business.

Now when he received the sacrament of the anointing at St. Rufin, a gloomy omen was discovered in the Gospel of the day. For it was this ; " A sword hath pierced through her soul." It is true, however, that at Langres after his acceptance by the Pope, when he went to the altar of the Martyr Mammes with the clergy singing the *Te Deum* in procession, on opening the Gospels for divination and taking the first verse that met his eye, he read, " Mother, behold thy son." Of this he made a great display, shewing it round everywhere. In word and in conduct he was wonderfully unstable, wonderfully light. He took delight in talk about military affairs, dogs and hawks, which he had learnt to do among the English. Hence on one occasion when he had dedicated a church, and I with a young clerk of good disposition was riding in attendance, he came on a countryman with a lance. Snatching this up, with the mitre still on his head, which he should have held sacred, and spurring on his horse, he couched it as if to strike an opponent. To him we said, the clerk in plain, but I in poetic fashion, " They agree not well and stay not together, the mitre and the lance."

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Meanwhile that great wealth of English money, of cups and vessels, which had been wickedly gathered together, was quickly squandered. I have certainly heard from Master Anselm, who had travelled with him, when now Bishop, to revisit England, that when he came there, so great complaints broke out for restitution of vessels here and money there, wherever he turned, that it was plain to the Master, that his much paraded riches had been stolen from others or acquired by dishonest means.

CHAPTER V

ABOUT three years after his appointment he gave the following sign, as it were, to his time. One of the nobles of the city was the castellan of a nun's convent, named Gerard, a man of great energy. He, although of small stature and of lean frame, had so lively a mind and tongue, such energy in the pursuit of war, that he compelled the provinces of Soissons, Laon and Nijons, to fear him and won the respect of most men. Although he was known far and wide as one of sterling character, sometimes he made biting jests in coarse language against those about him, but never against people of good character. Hence he took upon himself both to speak ill in private and to shew open displeasure against that Countess of whom mention has been made before, acting very perversely in so doing, because he was attacking Enguerrand, this woman's besieger, who had with his great wealth advanced Gerard's fortunes. But before taking a wife Gerard had himself been too intimate with the woman of whom we are speaking. After he had been her lover for some time, on his marriage he drew in

the rein of his wanton connection. Then the women too began to attack one another with foul words. For they were mutually aware of one another's lightness and the more they secretly knew of one another, the worse was their abuse. The Countess was therefore enraged against the other woman's husband, because she had been jilted by him and against his wife because she knew that from her lips frequently fell insulting remarks on herself, and being more venomous than any serpent, her determination to ruin the man waxed greater every day.

But because God puts a stumbling block in the way of those who would wilfully fall, an opportunity of destroying him suddenly occurred in the outbreak of enmity between Gerard and the Bishop Gaudry in consequence of offensive words used by Gerard about the Bishop and his household, which the Bishop endured neither patiently nor in silence. For having plotted with his friends and almost all the nobles of the city for the death of Gerard, after exchanging with them mutual oaths of assistance, to which certain rich women were parties, he left the matter in the hands of his fellow-conspirators and went on a journey to the Apostolic See, taken there by the basest designs, not to seek the Apostles, Thou knowest, O God, but that he might by his absence protect himself from any suspicion of complicity in such a crime. And so setting out about Martinmas, he arrived at Rome and stayed there until he learnt that the murder of his enemy had been carried out, who was as much hated by the bad as he was beloved by the good. Now the deed was done in the following manner :

On the sixth day of the Octave of the Epiphany, in the morning, that is, whilst it was still twilight, he rose from his bed to go to the principal church of the

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Blessed Virgin. And to one of the conspirators who met him he told his dream of the night before, which he said had stricken him with much fear. He vividly dreamed that two bears were plucking the liver or the lungs from his body. And, alas, he had had the misfortune to be kept from the sacrament for the following reason : A certain monk living at Barisiacum had undertaken the charge of two boys, who could only speak German, to teach them the French language. Now Barisiacum, with the manors pertaining to it, was in his jurisdiction. Seeing, therefore, that the boys were of fine manners and knowing they were of no mean birth, he seized them and held them to ransom. The mother of the boys sent with the sum agreed upon a fur tunic made of ermine and called a vest.

Dressed in this tunic then, and a purple cloak over it, he went on horseback with some knights to the church. Entering he had stopped before the image of the crucified Lord, his followers dispersing here and there among the various altars to the Saints, and the servants of the conspirators being on the look-out, when word is sent to the Bishop in his palace that Gerard of Crecy (for he took his surname from the Castle of which he was lord) had come down to the church to pray. Taking, therefore, swords under their cloaks, Rorigo, brother of the Bishop (and others) go through the crypt which runs round the apse to the place where he was praying. Now he was stationed at the foot of a column, called a pillar, there being several columns between in a line from the screen to about the middle of the church. And whilst the morning was still dark and there were few people to be seen in the great church, they seized the man from behind

as he prayed. He was praying with the fastening of his cloak thrown behind and his hands clasped on his breast. Seizing the cloak, therefore, behind, one of them so fastened him in it that he could not easily move his hands. Whilst he was thus held by the Bishop's steward, the latter said, "You are taken." And he with his usual boldness, turned his eye round on him (for he had one only) and looking at him said, "Go away, you foul lecher!" But the other said to Rorigo, "Strike!" Who drawing his sword with his left hand wounded him between the nose and brow. And he, feeling himself wounded, said, "Take me where you will." Then as they stabbed at him repeatedly and pressed him hard, he, in desperate case, cried out, "Holy Mary, aid me!" Saying this, he fell in extreme suffering.

Now there were in that conspiracy with the Bishop himself two archdeacons of the church, Walter and Guy. Guy was also the Treasurer, having a house on the other side of the church. From this house there soon rushed out two servants, who, coming hastily there, took part in the murder. For by that sacrilegious compact it had been resolved that should those of the bishop's palace dare to help, they should quickly come forth from that house. When therefore they had slashed his throat and his legs, besides giving him other wounds, and he was groaning in the middle of the church in extreme anguish, a few of the clergy who were then in the choir, and some women who were going round to pray, murmuring against them and half dead with fear, yet did not dare to make the least sound. When the murder had been done, the two picked soldiers returned to the Bishop's palace and with them were gathered the nobles of the city, thus

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betraying their own betrayal ; likewise also the archdeacons assembled there. Then the king's Governor, Ivo by name, a very prudent man, having summoned the royal troops and those of the Abbey of St. John, whose guardian Gerard had been, attacked the houses of the citizens who had been in the conspiracy, plundering and burning them and driving the men out of the city. Now the archdeacons and the nobles followed the murderers of Gerard everywhere, making a display of their fealty to the absent bishop.

CHAPTER VI

BUT the Bishop, remaining at Rome and pretending delight in the presence of the Apostolic Lord, was listening with eager expectation for some pleasing news to reach him from French parts. At last the fulfilment of his wishes was announced and the Lord Pope became aware that a great crime had been done in a great church. The Bishop had an interview with the Pope and by flattering presents shielded himself against suspicion of complicity. And so, more pleased than ever, Gaudry returned home from the City. But since the church, which had been outraged by a wicked act, needed purification, having sent a message to Hubert, the Bishop of Senlis, who was recently dismissed from his office for simony, he summoned him to do that work. At the assembly of the clergy and people for that purpose I was requested by Master Anselm, the Dean of the church and by the Canons to preach on the subject of that calamity to the people. The following was the general sense of that address :

“ Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto

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my soul. I sink in deep mire and there is no standing. Evil indeed ye had aforetime, but now the sword hath come even unto my soul. Ye are sunk in deep mire, being fallen in reward of your sins into extreme evil of utter despair. And so amid such there is no standing ; because the honour and power is fallen of those to whom ye should have recourse in peril, that is, your rulers and nobles. And though your bodies were oft hard put to it by your hatreds of one another, yet the soul was free of such, for that part in which remained the desire of salvation, even the Church, rejoiced in its inward wellbeing and its freedom from evil. The waters therefore and the sword have come in unto the soul, tribulations and discords penetrating and polluting the sanctity of the inner refuge. What reverence have ye, ye who know not spiritual things, what reverence think ye, for that place, when a man may not say his prayers there in safety ? Behold, God 'hath sent upon us the fierceness of his wrath, indignation, wrath and trouble by sending evil angels among you.' There is a wrath of indignation, wrath conceived out of indignation. Indignation, as ye know, is less than wrath. Was not God indignant with your sinful acts, when outside your city ye often suffered plunderings, burnings and killings ? Was He not wrathful when strife from without was brought within the state and civil discord began to be busy in our midst, when lords against citizens, citizens against lords, were moved by mutual provocation ; when Abbot's men against Bishop's men, Bishop's men against Abbot's men, were maddened with unnatural enmity ? But because indignation and wrath brought no amendment, at last on your mountains of hardness He hurled tribulation. For it was no mere pollution of this or that

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church with Christian blood, no raising of war somewhere on a church by driving and killing fugitives, but malignant intent conceived with criminal deliberation that butchered a man in prayer before the image of Christ hanging on the Cross. And the church was not, I say, this or that one, but the most flourishing of all the churches of France, one whose fame has travelled far beyond the Latin world. And who was the man? Was he not one admired for his illustrious birth, whose feats of arms so remarkable in a man of little stature but lofty soul, made him famous throughout France? Therefore the place, the deed, the shame will everywhere be bruited. If, then, in your souls, in your inmost hearts ye are not troubled at this mournful event, if ye have no compunction for the dishonour done to a sacred place, be assured that without doubt God will find a way for the path of His wrath and will set free to your utter destruction His hidden anger. And how think ye will God in the end spare the life of beasts, that is, of your bodies, when he spares not even your souls, when ye will not be corrected. Since, then, divine vengeance with deadly advance step by step comes on against us, be sure that unless ye shew yourselves amended under God's scourge, ye will fall into a far worse state through those civil strifes that are arising among you."

With such remarks and others did I, at the request of the clergy and the wish of the people, declare that the murderers of that noble man, their backers in the deed and their confederates, should be excommunicated through the aforesaid bishop who was reconciling the church, and not less those who had defended or harboured the murderers. And when they had all been excommunicated, the church was duly reconciled. Meanwhile the pronouncement of

this anathema was carried to the ears of the archdeacons and nobles, who had separated themselves from the unanimous feeling of the city. On me, therefore, because of the sermon which I preached and the excommunication that was pronounced, turned all the great madness of those who had been cut off from the church, especially of Walter, the archdeacon. There was indeed terrible thundering to be heard, but out of it, by God's will, came no bolt. In secret they were against me, openly they shewed respect. Let me now return to the matter I have left.

CHAPTER VI BIS

ARMED with seals and the Apostolic rescripts the Lord Prelate returned from Rome. But the king, after the murder of Gerard, believing the Bishop to be a party to the crime, which under colour of absence he sought to conceal, gave order that all the Bishop's palace should be stripped of corn, wine and meat, and he at Rome was aware of the plundering and the cause of it. And so letters were sent to the King, who had determined that he should be kept out of his See and had deprived him of his property, and other letters were despatched by him to his fellow-bishops and to the abbots of his own and their dioceses ; but since between Laon and Soissons we have said before the bridge of the Ailette was the boundary, when he set foot on the first soil of his district, those archdeacons and nobles whom we had excommunicated, hastened to meet him. These he received with such loving kisses and embraces that he did not deign to pay a visit to the church of The Blessed Mary, which by

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God's will we serve, although that was the first in his bishopric to which he came, whereas close by it he had long talk with those whom alone he thought faithful to him. Going thence he was entertained at Coucy with all his following.

When I knew this, since I had much feared such conduct on his part, I refrained entirely from seeing or saluting him. But, after three days, if I am not mistaken, letting the madness which he inwardly felt against me seem outwardly to be lulled (for his satellites had bitterly attacked me before him with regard to the aforesaid events), he asked me to go to him. And when I had presented myself there and had seen his house full of excommunicated men and murderers, I was enraged, and he demanded that I should not strive for his exclusion from the church, shewing me the Pope's letters. I promised what help I could, falsely, as Thou knowest, O God, and not from my heart. For I saw that he was actually a partner in the crime with those whom his own church, had excommunicated, since this Enguerrand was his abettor and that Countess, who the day before Gerard was killed at the instigation of those two, had sharpened their swords by her own tongue and rewarded the murderers with her favour. As therefore he was shut out of the city by the King's orders, with exceedingly rash boldness he threatened to enter it; and what was hardly possible for a Caesar or for an Augustus, he declared he would do by force of arms. And so he collected a body of knights and spent large sums of what he had accumulated by foul means, but without any actual profit, as was usual with him. At length, after gaining nothing but ridicule with so many auxiliaries, with the help of intermediaries he made terms for himself and his accomplices in the

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murder of Gerard, that is, the nobles of the city and both the archdeacons, with Lewis, the King's son (since then king) by means of a huge bribe.

Having entered the city therefore and held a meeting at St. Nicholas of the Wood, during mass, which he was celebrating there, he gave out that he would excommunicate those who had confiscated the property of those men, and had, when Gerard was killed, left the city. When I heard him say this, whispering in the ear of a certain abbot sitting next to me, I said, "Listen, further, to this absurdity. He ought to have excommunicated those who polluted his church with such a horrible crime, whereas he revenges himself on those who inflicted a just vengeance on the murderers." But the Bishop, afraid of all good consciences and seeing me muttering, thought I was speaking of him and said, "What are you saying, Lord Abbot?" Then Walter, the Archdeacon, putting himself forward before leave to speak was given, said, "Go on, Lord Bishop, with what you had begun. The Lord Abbot was speaking of other things."

And so he excommunicated those who had harmed the troops of the sacrilegious slaughterers, an act that was execrated by clergy and people. Therefore for a long time the whole city and diocese were embittered against the Bishop because he deferred so long the excommunication of the murderers of Gerard. At last, seeing himself suspected and almost cursed by everyone, he did excommunicate the guilty men and their accomplices. But since he had promised much money to these, who had befriended him and the assassins' accessories at the Court, that is the king's satellites, and now began to draw back from his promises, who shall say what taunts he

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heard in public, while none of those who took his side in the matter, dared to enter the king's court, until they had redeemed their doomed heads with much silver and gold from the death threatening them. And yet he could not be accused by the church when it was known that he was excused by the Apostolic See.

CHAPTER VII

Now after some time when he had set out for England to extract money from the English king, whom he had served, and who had formerly been his friend, the Archdeacons Walter and Guy, with the nobles of the city, devised the following plan: Of old time such ill-fate had settled upon that city that neither God nor any lord was feared therein, but according to each man's power and lust the state was involved in rapine and murder. For to begin with the source of the plague, whenever it happened that the king came there, he who ought to have exacted respect for himself with royal severity, was himself first shamefully fined on his own property. When his horses were led to the water morning or evening, his grooms were beaten and the horses carried off. It was known that the very clergy were held in such contempt, that neither their persons nor their goods were spared, as it is written, "Like as the people, so the priest." But what shall I say about the baser people? No one of the countrymen came into the city, no one except under the safest conduct approached it, who was not thrown into prison and held to ransom, or was not, as opportunity served, drawn without cause into a lawsuit.

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As an example let me adduce one practice, which occurring amongst barbarians or Scythians, men having no code of laws, would be regarded as most iniquitous. When on the Saturday the country populace from different parts came there to buy and sell, the townfolk carried round as for sale, beans, barley or any kind of corn in cup and platter or other kind of measure in the marketplace, and when they had offered them for sale to the countrymen seeking such things, the later having settled the price promised to buy. "Follow me," said the seller, "to my house that you may there see the rest of the corn which I am selling you, and when you have seen it, may take it away." He followed, but when he came to the bin, the honest seller, having raised and held up the lid, would say, "Bend your head and shoulders over the bin, that you may see that the bulk does not differ from the sample which I shewed you in the market-place." And when the buyer getting up on the pediment of the bin leaned his belly over it, the worthy seller standing behind lifted up his feet and pushed the unwary man into the bin, and having put the lid down on him as he fell, kept him in safe prison until he ransomed himself. Such and like things were done in the city. No one was safe going out at night. There remained for him nothing but plunder, capture or murder.

The clergy with the archdeacons considering this, and the nobles catching at pretexts for exacting money from the people, offer them through agents the choice of making composition by paying a sum to cover them. Now Commune is a new and a bad name of an arrangement for all the poorest classes to pay their usual due of servitude to their lords once only in the year, and to make good any breach of the laws they

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have committed by the payment fixed by law, and to be entirely free from all other exactions usually imposed on serfs. The people seizing on this opportunity for freeing themselves gathered huge sums of money to fill the gaping mouths of so many greedy men. And they, pleased with the shower poured upon them, took oaths binding themselves in the matter.

A pledge of mutual aid had been thus exchanged by the clergy and nobles with the people, when the Bishop returned with much wealth from England and being moved to anger against those responsible for this innovation, for a long time kept away from the city. But a quarrel full of honour and glory began between him and Walter, the archdeacon, his accomplice. The Archdeacon made very unbecoming remarks about his Bishop on the subject of the death of Gerard. Whether the Bishop had any talk on the matter with others I know not, but this I do know, that he complained to me about him saying, "Lord Abbot, if it should so happen that Walter should start any charges against me at any council, would you take it without offence? Is it not he, who at the time when you left your fellow-monks and went to Ely, openly flattered you, but secretly raised dissensions against you, publicly taking your side, but privately stirring me up against you?" With such speeches did he try to win me to oppose that dangerous man, conscious of the weight of his charges, fearful and suspicious of universal condemnation.

Saying therefore that he was moved with relentless wrath against those who had taken that oath and the principals in the transaction, in the end his loud-sounding words were suddenly quieted by the offer of a great heap of silver and gold. Therefore he swore that he would maintain the rights of the

Commune according to the terms duly drawn up at Noyon and Saint-Quintin. The King too was induced by a bribe from the people to confirm the same by oath. O my God, who could say how many disputes arose when the gifts of the people were accepted, how many after oath had been sworn to reverse what they had agreed to, whilst they sought to bring back the serfs who had been freed from the oppression of their yoke, to their former state. At least there was implacable hate by the Bishop and nobles against the citizens, and whereas he has not the power to crush the freedom of the French, after the fashion of Normandy and England, the pastor is weak and forgetful of his sacred calling through his insatiable greed. Whenever one of the people entered a court of law, where he was dependent not on the justice of God, but on his ability to please his judges, if I may say so, he was drained of his substance to the last penny.

Hence because the taking of gifts is wont to be attended by the subversion of all justice, the coiners of the currency, knowing that if they did wrong in their office, they could save themselves by money bribes, corrupted the coinage with so much base metal that through this very many were reduced to poverty. For as they made coins of the cheapest bronze, which in a moment by certain dishonest arts they made brighter than silver, (shame on them !) fond men were deceived, and giving up their goods of great or little value, got in exchange nothing but dross. And the patient suffering of this by the Lord Bishop was well rewarded, and thus not only within the province of Laon but in all directions the ruin of many was hastened. And when he was deservedly powerless to uphold the value of his own

currency wickedly debased by himself, he instituted pence of Amiens, also most debased, to be current in the city for some time ; but when he could by no means keep that up, he struck an impression of his own time, on which he had stamped a pastoral staff to represent himself. This was received with such laughter and scorn, that it had less value than the debased coinage.

Meantime since, on the issue of each of these new coins, proclamation was made that no one should criticise the wretched impression, there ensued frequent occasion for accusing the people of speaking evil of the Bishop's ordinances, and hence exaction of all sorts of heavy fines could be carried out. Moreover a certain monk of the very worst reputation in every respect, named Theodorus of Thorn, of which place he was a native, brought very large quantities of silver from Flanders. Bringing all this down to the false standard of the Laon mint, he scattered it all over the surrounding province. By appealing to the greed of the rich with his hateful presents and bringing in lies, perjury and want, he robbed his country of truth, justice and wealth. No act of an enemy, no plunderings, no burnings have hurt the province more ever since the Roman walls contained the ancient mint of the city.

But since " Impiety long hidden does violence at times to the show of honour artfully drawn over it, and things evident cannot be concealed ; as bright light pierces through glass, so does it through the countenance," that which he did to Gerard hiding his hand in it, he did to another Gerard some time afterwards and gave manifest proof of his cruelty. It was an older Gerard, perhaps a foreman over the countrymen who belonged to him ; and because he

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was more attached to Thomas, reputed son of Enguerrand, of whom we have spoken before, the most wicked man we have known in this generation, the Bishop regarded him as a general enemy. Seizing him therefore and thrusting him into prison in the palace, he had his eyes put out at night by the hands of his negro servant. By this deed he brought open shame upon himself and the old story of what he had done to the first Gerard, was renewed, both clergy and people being aware that the canon of Toledo, if I am not mistaken, forbade the infliction of death or the passing of a sentence of death or mutilation by bishops, priests and clergy and the very rumour of such acts raised the anger of the King. Perhaps too, it reached the ears of the Apostolic See ; at least I know the Pope suspended him from his office, and I believe, for no other reason. But to make matters worse, during his suspension he dedicated a church. Therefore he goes to Rome and by persuasive words the Pope's anger is assuaged, and he is sent back to us with his authority restored. And so, God seeing that pastors and flock were by act and will partners in wickedness, could no longer restrain his judgment and at last permitted the malice that had been conceived to break out into open rage, which in its headlong mad career was through the vengeance of God shattered by a dreadful fall.

Having therefore summoned the nobles and certain of the clergy on the last day of Lent in the holy days of the Passion of our Lord, he determined to urge the annulment of the Commune, to which he had sworn, and had by bribes induced the King to swear, and the day before the Passover, that is to say, on the day of the Lord's Supper, he summoned the King to this pious duty and instructed the King and all his people

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to break their oaths, in which snare he had first placed his own neck, on the day, that is, on which his predecessor, Ascelin, had betrayed his King as aforesaid. For on that day, when he should have performed that most glorious of all a prelate's duties, the consecration of the oil and the absolution of the people from their sins, he was not even seen to enter the church. He was intriguing with the King's courtiers for the annulment of the Commune and for the restoration by the King of the laws of the city to their former state. But the citizens fearing their overthrow, promised four hundred (perhaps more) pounds to the King and his courtiers. In reply the Bishop begged the nobles to go with him to interview the King. They promised on their part seven hundred pounds, and King Louis, son of Philip, of conspicuous person and a mighty warrior, hating sloth in business, of dauntless courage in adversity, and in other respects a good man, in this was not very just that he gave ear and attention too much to worthless persons debased by greed. And this redounded to his own great loss and blame and the ruin of many, which it is certain took place here and elsewhere.

The King's craving for money being turned therefore, as I said, to feed upon the larger promise, through his consent the oaths of the Bishop and the nobles became void without any regard for honour or the sacred season. That night because of the outbreak of disorder caused by his most unjust blow, although the King had a lodging elsewhere, he was afraid to sleep outside the Bishop's palace. Very early in the morning the King departed and the Bishop assured the nobles they need have no fear about the agreement to pay so much money, knowing that he himself would pay whatever they had prom-

ised. "And," said he, "if I do not perform my promise, hand me over to the king's prison for ransom."

The compact of the Commune being broken, such rage, such amazement seized the citizens that all the officials abandoned their duties and the stalls of the craftsmen and cobblers were closed and nothing was exposed for sale by the innkeepers and hucksters, who expected to have nothing left when the lords began plundering. For at once the property of all was calculated by the Bishop and nobles, and whatever any man was known to have given to arrange the Commune, so much was demanded of him to procure its annulment. These events took place on the day of the Passover, which is called the preparation, and on the holy Sabbath when their minds were being prepared to receive the body and blood of the Lord, they were made ready for murders only here, for perjury there. Why say more? All the efforts of the prelate and the nobles in these days were reserved for fleecing their inferiors. But those inferiors were no longer moved by mere anger, but goaded into a murderous lust for the death of the Bishop and his accomplices and bound themselves by oath to effect their purpose. Now they say that four hundred took the oath. Such a mob could not be secret and when it came to the ears of Anselm towards evening of the holy Sabbath, he sent word to the Bishop, as he was retiring to rest, not to go out to the early morning service, knowing that if he did he must certainly be killed. But he, infatuated with excessive pride said, "Fie, surely I shall not perish at the hands of such." Yet notwithstanding his scornful words, he did not dare to rise for matins or to enter the church. The next day, as he followed the clergy

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in procession, he ordered his household people and all the soldiers coming behind him to carry short swords under their garments. In this procession, when a little disorder, as is likely in a crowd, began to arise, one of the citizens coming out of the crypt and thinking the time had come for the murder, to which they were sworn, began to cry out in a loud voice as a signal, "Commune, Commune!" over and over again. And because it was a feast day, this was easily stopped, yet it brought suspicion on the other party. And so, when the service of the mass was over, the Bishop summoned a great number of countrymen from the episcopal manors and manned the towers of the church and gave orders that his palace should be guarded, although he was almost as much hated by them, as they knew that the piles of money, which he had promised the King, must be drained from their own purses.

Now on the second day after Easter it is the custom for the clergy to assemble at St. Vincent's. Since therefore the conspirators had been anticipated the day before, they had decided to act on this day, and would have done so, if they had seen that all the nobles were with the Bishop. For they had found one of the nobles in the suburb, a harmless man, who had recently married a young cousin of mine, a woman of modest character. But they were unwilling to attack him fearing to put others on their guard. Having therefore reached the third day of Easter and feeling more secure the Bishop allows those men to depart, whom he had put in the towers and palace to protect him. On the fourth day I went to him, because I had been plundered of my supply of corn and of some legs of pork, called bacon, through his disorders. When interviewed by me and requested

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to relieve the city of these great disturbances, he replied, "What do ye think they can do by their riots? If John, my moor, were to take by the nose the most powerful man amongst them, he would not dare so much as to grunt. For just now I have compelled them to renounce what they call their Commune for so long as I live." I spoke, and then seeing the man overcome with pride, I refrained from saying more. Yet before I left the city, by reason of his instability we quarrelled with mutual recriminations. But although he was warned by many of the imminent peril, he took no notice of any one.

CHAPTER VIII

THE next day, that is, the fifth in Easter week, after midday, as he was engaged in business with Archdeacon Walter about the getting of money, behold there arose a disorderly noise throughout the city, men shouting 'Commune!' and again through the middle of the chapel of the Blessed Mary through that door by which the murderers of Gerard had come and gone, there citizens now entered the Bishop's court with swords, battle-axes, bows and hatchets, and carrying clubs and spears, a very great company. As soon as this sudden attack was discovered, the nobles rallied from all sides to the Bishop, having sworn to give him aid against such an onset, if it should occur. In this rally Guinimon, the chatelain, an aged nobleman of handsome presence and guiltless character, armed only with shield and spear, ran out through the church and as he entered the Bishop's hall, was the first to fall, struck on the back of the

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head with a battle-axe by a certain Rainbert, who was his fellow-citizen. Immediately afterwards Regnier, of whom I spoke before as married to my cousin, hurrying to enter the palace, was struck from behind with a spear when trying to enter by mounting on the pulpitum¹ of the Bishop's chapel, and there falling headlong was at once consumed by the fire of the palace from his waist downwards. Ado, the Vidame, quarrelsome, but brave, separated from the rest and able to do little by himself among so many, as he was striving to reach the Bishop's palace, encountered the full force of the attack, but with spear and sword made such a stand that in a moment he struck down two of those who came on. Then mounting the dining-table in the hall, wounded now in the knees and other parts of the body and at last only supporting himself on his knees, whilst striking at his assailants all round him, he kept them off for a long time, until, becoming exhausted, he was struck through the body with a lance and after a little was reduced to ashes by the fire in that house.

Next the outrageous mob attacking the Bishop and howling before the walls of his palace, he with some who were succouring him fought them off by hurling of stones and shooting of arrows. For he now, as at all times, shewed great spirit as a fighter ; but because he had wrongly and in vain taken up another sword, by the sword he perished. Therefore being unable to stand against the reckless assaults of the people, he put on the clothes of one of his servants and flying to the vaults of the church hid himself in

¹ The Latin word here is "*podium*." Regnier is distinctly described as struggling to mount some sort of steps or incline, and this seems the most probable translation ; the pulpitum was a screen and loft separating choir from nave.

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a cask, shut up in which with the head fastened on by a faithful follower he thought himself safely hidden. And as they ran hither and thither demanding where, not the Bishop, but the hangdog, was, they seized one of his pages, but through his faithfulness could not get what they wanted. Laying hands on another, they learn from the traitor's nod where to look for him. Entering the vaults, therefore, and searching everywhere, at last they found him in the following manner.

There was a pestilent fellow, a bondman of the church of the Blessed Vincent, but for a long time an official and overseer of Enguerrand of Coucy, who being set over the collection of tolls paid for crossing the bridge called Soord, sometimes watched until there were only a few travellers passing, and having robbed them of all their property, in order that they might make no complaint against him, threw them into the river with a weight round their necks. How often he had done this, God only knows. The number of the thefts and robberies being more than any one could count, the unchecked wickedness of his heart, and one as might say, was displayed also in the truculence of his looks. This man having incurred the displeasure of Enguerrand, went over wholly to the party of the Commune in Laon. He who had spared neither monk nor clerk nor stranger, in fact no sex, was last of all to be the slayer of a bishop. He the leader and instigator of this attack searched most diligently for the Bishop, whom he hated more bitterly than the rest.

And so, as they sought for him in every vessel, this fellow halted in front of that cask, where the man was hiding, and having broken in the head, asked again and again who was there. And he, hardly able to

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move his frozen lips under his blows, said "A prisoner." Now the Bishop was wont in mockery to call him Isengrin, I suppose, because of his wolfish look, for so some people call wolves. The wretch, therefore, says to the Bishop, "Is this my Lord Isengrin stored away?" Renulf¹ therefore, sinner though he was, yet the Lord's anointed, was dragged forth from the cask by the hair, beaten with many blows and brought out into the open air in the narrow lane of the clergy's cloister before the house of the chaplain Godfrey. And as he piteously implored them, ready to take oath that he would henceforth cease to be their Bishop, that he would give them unlimited riches, that he would leave the country, and as they with hardened hearts jeered at him, one named Bernard and surnamed de Brueys, lifting his battle-axe brutally dashed out the brains of that sacred, though sinner's, head, and he slipping between the hands of those who held him, was dead before he reached the ground stricken by another thwart blow under the eye-sockets and across the middle of the nose. There brought to his end, his legs were cut off and many another wound inflicted. But Thibaut seeing the ring on the finger of the erstwhile prelate and not being able to draw it off, cut off the dead man's finger and took it. And so stripped to his skin he was thrown into a corner in front of his chaplain's house. My God, who shall recount the mocking words that were thrown at him by passers-by, as he lay there, and with what clods and stones and dirt his corpse was covered? But before I go on to other matters, I must say that a certain act did much to bring about his end. Two days, I

¹ Renulfus, according to the Latin, but obviously the bishop is meant.

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think, before his death there was a meeting of the chief of his clergy, because he had recently told the King when staying in the city, that the clergy were not to be considered, because they were almost all of them born king's serfs. When confronted with his words, he denied them, speaking after this manner, "May the Holy Communion, which I have just received at that altar"—stretching out his right hand towards it—"turn to my ruin, and I call down the sword of the Holy Spirit on my soul, if I spoke such words to the King about you." When they heard this, some were utterly confounded and swore (by the Sacrament) that they heard him out of his own mouth tell the King that. Manifestly the instability of his character and his false tongue brought on him his ruin.

CHAPTER IX

MEANTIME one part of the raging mob made their way to the house of Raoul, who was the Bishop's serving-man and had been one of the friends of Gerard of Crecy, a man of small stature but heroic spirit. He in breastplate and helmet and light harness resolved to resist, but seeing the numbers too great and fearing to be thrown into the fire, cast away his arms and exposed himself unprotected to their mercy with his arms stretched out in the shape of a cross. They with no thought of God cruelly butchered him, as he lay prostrate. He himself before the murder of Gerard in the church saw the following vision: He thought he was in the church of the Blessed Mary and that there assembled men of wicked disposition, who began to play foreign

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games and to exhibit to some who sat round, strange sights. Whilst that went on, other men from the house of Guy, the Treasurer, came forth bearing cups, in which was contained a drink of such foul odour that it was intolerable for those who smelled it, and this was carried along the rows of spectators. The meaning of this is clearer than daylight. What a horrible and hateful sport of demons leapt forth there, what monstrous stench of wickedness everywhere poured out of that same house, is now manifest. For the maddened populace first threw brands into that house from which the fire leapt into the church and lastly seized the Bishop's palace.

He had also another premonition of his coming fate. In a vision his squire reported to him and said, "Lord, your horse in the front parts is of great and unusual size, but its hinder parts are very small, so that I have never seen the equal." For he had been a man of great wealth and held in high esteem, all which prosperity was brought down to the meanness of that wretched death : for the horse signifies the glory of this world.

And so chiefly through the sin of one man it came to pass that a most famous church was brought to miserable ruin. From the house of the Treasurer, who was also by simony the Archdeacon, the fire was seen to spread into the church. This, in honour of the solemn season, being nobly furnished all round with hangings and tapestries, when the fire increased, a few of the coverings are supposed to have been carried off stealthily rather than consumed in the flames ; some tapestries too, because the ropes from the pulleys could not be worked by a few men, collapsed with the heat. The gilded panels of the altar and the shrines of the relics were rescued with the repa,

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as it is called, which projects above them. The rest, I suppose, in a ring were destroyed by the flames ; for one of the higher clergy having shut himself in it and not daring to come forth, lest he should encounter the wandering crowds, and hearing the fire crackling all round him, ran to the Bishop's chair and kicking at the glass over it broke through and so leapt down.

The image of the crucified Lord splendidly covered with gold and adorned with jewels and the vessel of lapis lazuli hanging before the feet of the image melted and fell to the ground and was recovered not without much loss of the gold. When, therefore, the church and the palace were burning, marvellous to relate and by the inscrutable judgment of heaven, either a brand or a burning coal flew on to the nuns' convent and setting fire to the church of St. John reduced it to ashes as well as that of the Blessed Mary called Profunda and of St. Peter.

But the tale of how the wives of the nobles behaved at such a crisis, is a pleasing one. The wife of Ado, the Vidame, seeing her husband, when the rising began, joining the Bishop's party, and believing it meant instant death, began to beg his pardon for any wrong she had done him, clinging closely to him for some time with cries of sorrow and giving him her last kisses as she said, " Why do you leave me to the swords of the towns-people ? " He grasping the woman's right hand and holding his lance told his steward (who happened to be amongst the first of the traitors) to carry his shield behind him. He not only did not carry his shield behind, but reviling him cut him down. No longer then did he acknowledge him whose servant he was and on whom he was waiting a little while before at dinner. His wife, therefore, passing safely through the mobs was

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concealed in the house of a certain doorkeeper of the Bishop, but when she saw the assault and the firing of the building, she turned to fly just where chance took her. And having fallen in the way of some of the women of the town, she was seized by them, beaten with their fists and stripped of the costly clothes she was wearing and was scarcely able to reach St. Vincent's clad in a nun's habit.

But my cousin, when her husband left her, not troubling about the house furniture and only keeping a cloak for herself, with manlike agility climbed the wall which surrounded the garden and jumped down from it. Then taking refuge in the hovel of some poor woman and perceiving after a little the flames increasing, she rushed to the door which the old woman had barred, broke the bar with a stone, and wrapping herself in the habit and veil, which she had obtained from a kinswoman, in the belief that she could be kept safe among the nuns, and then seeing the fire burning hotly there, turned back on her tracks and fled to a house farther off until the next day; then being sought for by her kinsfolk she appeared and thereupon the anguish she had felt through the fear of death was changed to more violent grief for her husband.

Some others, that is the wife and daughters of the castellan Guinimar with many more hid themselves in mean places. But Walter the Archdeacon, being with the Bishop and seeing the hall besieged, because he knew he had always added oil to the flames, leapt out through the window of the house into the gardens of the prelate and from the wall which surrounded it, into the vineyards, then by unfrequented ways with his head covered, betook himself to the Castle of Mons Acutus. But when the citizens could not

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find him anywhere, they said in jest that through fear of them he was keeping close to the sewers. The wife, too, of Roger, the lord of Mons Acutus, named Armengard, being that day in the city, as her husband was castellan of the abbey after Gerard, with the wife of Ralph, the serving man of the nuns, I believe, and in the garb of a nun reached St. Vincent's by way of the valley of Bibracina. But the six-years-old son of that Ralph was carried out by some one under a cloak to save him, and was met by a hanger-on, who looked to see what was under the cloak and thereupon cut his throat, as he lay in the other's arms.

And so through the vineyards lying between two spurs of the mountain the fugitive clergy and women passed that day and night, men having no fear of the woman's dress, nor women of the men's. So rapid too was the progress of the flames on either side, as the wind drove them this way, that the monks feared everything they had would be burnt. But the fear of those who had taken refuge there was as great as if a sword threatened their throats. Guy, archdeacon and treasurer, was fortunate in not being involved in the disaster. He had gone before Easter to pray at the church of St. Mary at Versailles. The murderers were especially annoyed at his absence.

After the Bishop therefore, and the chief of the nobles had been slain, the assailants turned upon the houses of the survivors. All night then they strove to break into the house of William, son of Hadwin, who had not joined in the conspiracy of the citizens to murder Gerard, but had gone in the morning to pray with the man who was to be slain. And when they had pressed home the assault on it here with firebrands and there with scaling-ladders, tearing at the walls with axe and pike, and those within

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resisting stoutly, at last he was driven to surrender, and by the wonderful judgment of God, although they hated him worse than the rest, he was put in fetters safe and unharmed. The son of the castellan was treated in the same way. Now there was in the house of William a young man also named William, the room-mate of the Bishop, who won much honour in that defence. He, when the house was taken, was questioned before that party of the citizens who had besieged the house if he knew whether the Bishop had been slain or not, and he replied that he did not know. For those who slew the Bishop were a different party from those who had stormed the house. And when on going round, they found the Bishop's corpse, they asked the young man whether he could prove the body lying there was his by any mark. Now the head and face had been so disfigured by his many wounds that they could not be recognised. "Well," said he, "I remember when he was alive he frequently used to say when talking about military matters, which to his sorrow he much loved, that once in a mock fight he was attacking in sport on horseback a certain soldier and by a stroke of that knight's lance his collar-bone was broken." And when they looked they found the hard lump where the bone was joined.

Now Adalberon, the Abbot of St. Vincent, hearing that the Bishop was slain, and wishing to go there, was thereupon plainly told that if he ventured into the midst of the maddened mob, he would quickly fall by a similar death. Those who were present at these events, positively declare that day followed day so closely that no signs of darkness preceded the fall of night. When I objected that the brightness of the flames was the cause, they swore that the fire was

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suppressed and burnt out in the day, as was true. But the fire in the nuns' convent so got the upper hand as to consume some of the bodies of the Saints.

CHAPTER X

Now on the morrow, as there was hardly any one who passed the bishop's corpse without casting at him some insult or curse, but no one thought of burying him, Master Anselm, who the day before, on the outbreak of the rebellion, had entirely hidden himself, poured out entreaties to the authors of the tragedy to allow the man to be buried, if only because he had the name and rank of a bishop; and they reluctantly consented. Because, therefore, he had lain naked on the ground as though he had been a vile dog, from the evening of the fifth day of Easter to the third hour of the following day, at last the Master ordered him to be taken up and with a salban thrown over him to be carried away to St. Vincent's. One cannot describe the threats and abuse that were showered upon those who cared for his burial or with how many curses the dead man was pelted. Being carried to the church, he had at his funeral none at all of the offices that are paid to any Christian, much less a bishop. The earth being only half scraped out to receive him, the body was so tightly packed in the tiny coffin, that the breast and belly were crushed even to bursting. With such evil men to lay him out in the manner shewn, the worse handling by them of his wretched body, so far as they might, was proved by those who were present, their testimony remaining to this day. That day there was no divine service by the monks in the church. Why do I say that day? Nay, for several days, fearful for the safety of

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those who fled to them, they dreaded death for themselves also.

Next the wife and daughters of Guinimon, a very noble family, themselves placed the body of the castellan on a hand-cart and drew it themselves. Behind him Rainer, the lower half of his body being taken up somewhere, was placed between the two wheels over the axle with the upper part of his hips still hissing hot from the flames and was also brought in pitiable fashion by one of his countrymen and a noble young girl, his kinswoman. Over these two, kindly words were spoken, as is written in the book of Kings, all well-disposed people mourning over their death, nor were they in any way evil except in taking part with the murderers of Gerard. Hence they were buried with much more compassion than their bishop. Moreover, the remains of Ado, the Vidame, a very few fragments found many days after the rebellion and fire, were tied up in a small cloth and kept until the day on which Raoul, Archbishop of Rheims came to reconcile the church. He, going to St. Vincent's, celebrated a solemn mass there for the first time on behalf of the Bishop and his confederates many days after their deaths. But Radulf, the *seneschal*, on the same day as the others, was brought and buried by his old mother with his little son, and the son was laid on the breast of his father.

Now the venerable and wise Archbishop after this better disposal of some of the bodies of the dead, having with much grief of their kin and connections paid to all divine rites, preached a sermon on that accursed Commune, by which contrary to justice and right, serfs had violently withdrawn themselves from the claims of their lords. " ' Servants,' saith the Apostle, ' be subject to your masters with all

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fear.' And let not servants impute hardness and greed to their masters, let them still obey. 'Not only the good and gentle, but also the froward.' In the original canons they are distinctly banned who teach serfs to disobey their masters for religion's sake or to fly anywhere, much less to resist. A further proof of this is the fact that no one is admitted among clerks or into holy orders or to be a monk, unless he is free of servitude ; moreover, when so admitted, he may by no means be kept against the demands of his master." Many times he maintained this principle in the king's court and at other times in various assemblies. This we have said by way of anticipation ; now let us return to the orderly narrative.

CHAPTER XI

Now when the wicked citizens had duly weighed the enormity of the crime done by them, they were consumed with dread, fearing greatly the King's judgment, and hence when they ought to have sought a cure for their hurt, they only added wound to wound. For they decided to call in Thomas, the son of de Coucy, who had the castle of Marne, to defend them against the King's attack. He, it appears, attained power to ruin hosts of people by preying from early youth on the poor, and pilgrims to Jerusalem. So unheard-of in our times was his cruelty, that men considered cruel seem more merciful in killing cattle than he in murdering men. For he did not merely kill them outright with the sword and for definite offences, as is usual, but by butchery after horrible tortures. For when he was compelling prisoners to ransom themselves, he hung them up by their testicles, sometimes with his own hands, and these often breaking away through the weight

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of the body, there followed at once the breaking out of their vital parts. Others were suspended by their thumbs or even their private parts and were weighted with a stone placed on their shoulders, and he himself walking below them, when he failed to extort what he could not get by other means, beat them madly with cudgels until they promised what satisfied him, or perished under punishment.

No one can tell how many expired in his dungeons and chains by starvation, disease and torture. But it is certain that two years before, when he had gone to the mountains of Soissons to give aid against some countrymen, three of these hid themselves in a cave and coming to the entrance into the cave with his lance he drove his weapon into the mouth of one of them with so hard a thrust, that the iron of the lance breaking through the entrails passed out by the anus. Why go on with instances that have no end? The two left in it both perished by his hand. Again, one of his prisoners being wounded could not march. He asked the man why he did not go faster. He replied that he could not. "Stop," said he, "I will make you hurry and be sorry for it." Leaping down from his horse, he cut off both his feet, and of that the man died. Of what use is it to recount these horrors, when later there will be like occasion for mentioning them? I will return to my matter.

This man long gave shelter to the murderers of Gerard, whilst under excommunication, and long encouraged them, cherishing none but the worst criminals, and to him is applicable rather than to Catiline the saying of Sallust, "Out of mere delight was he evil and cruel." To set the crown upon their wrong doing, they turned to him with a request that he would come and protect them against the

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King, and when at last he did so, they admitted him into the city. After hearing their petition, he consulted his friends what he should do, and was unanimously advised by them that his strength was not sufficient to hold the city against the King, counsel which he dared not make known for some time to the madmen whilst in their city. Therefore, he told them to come out into the open country where he would reveal to them his intentions. When they had gone about two miles outside, he told them this: "Since this city is the capital of the realm, it cannot be held against the King by me. But if ye fear the royal troops, follow me into my land and take me for your patron and friend." At those words they were exceedingly dismayed. Maddened therefore, with fear because of what they had done and thinking the King was threatening their lives, a countless host of the people fled with him. Teudegold too, the slayer of the bishop, who, sword in hand, had searched the ceilings, the vaults and the claustral recesses of the church of the Blessed Vincent to find fugitives to kill, who displaying the episcopal ring on his finger proved his right to be their head, he, with his accomplices did not dare to return to the city and followed Thomas almost in destitution. Moreover, Thomas had set free William, son of Hadwin, and other persons in the city. But rumour with the speed of Pegasus flying abroad, roused the men of the neighbouring country as well as those of the towns with the tale that the city was emptied of inhabitants. Then all the villagers rush upon the deserted city and see the houses full of property and with no one to defend them. Even wealthy people disguised themselves in mean dress, for they were afraid to draw the eyes of the nobles upon themselves.

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At that time the unlawful and incestuous wife of Enguerrand under guise of continence covering her contempt for Enguerrand because of his age and bulk, yet could not live without enjoyment of lovers. Enamoured therefore, of a handsome youth and kept from all converse with him by Enguerrand, she suddenly became so mad with lust for the man that having summoned him to her side, she gave her little daughter to him in marriage to cover their wicked intrigue and made him the defender of her land against Thomas, for whom his so-called father cherished an implacable hatred and whom she wished to disinherit. He being at Coucy and threatening Thomas with enmity by every means in his power, but having insufficient resources to venture upon a difficult task, was befriended by fortune in the following manner :

Now Enguerrand and Guy, as he was called, learning that Thomas had left the city followed by the people, went to Laon and found the houses filled with an abundance of everything, but without inhabitants. Such plenty was there that if it had been carefully guarded by the rulers to save it from waste by hangers-on and thieves, all attempts to drive out that young man would have been in vain, and he would have felt no want for the rest of his life. Who should say, or saying would be believed, what money, what clothing, what provisions of all kinds were found there ? For when the crowds of rustics and those in the outskirts, moreover, the people of Montaign and Pierrepont and La Fere too came there before those of Coucy, wonderful to say, what did the first comers find, what did they carry off, when our people arriving later boasted that they had found everything in order and almost untouched !

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But what consideration or self-restraint could there be amongst brutes and fools? The wine and corn they happened to find having no value and because there were no means on the spot of carrying them off, were wantonly and shockingly wasted. Then the proceeds of their plundering began to give rise to quarrels and any booty passed out of the hands of the weaker into the possession of the stronger. Two, if they met a third, were certain to plunder him. So wretched was the state of the city. Those who had fled from it, had pillaged and burnt the houses of the clergy and nobles, whom they hated; but now the nobles remaining there lost all their property and furnishings down to the bars and bolts.

Not a single monk then could enter the city in safety or go out of it without being deprived of his horse or stripped of the clothes on his body. Guilty and innocent alike had collected at St. Vincent's with a great quantity of goods. What swords, Lord God, were drawn over monks willing to surrender their lives as well as their property! There, William, the son of Hadwin, forgetting the deliverance granted him by God, allowed a countryman of his, to whom he had just promised security for life and limb and had drawn him into his power through trust in his promises, to be taken and condemned by the servants of the nobles, Guinimar and Regnier, who had been slain. For being fastened by his feet to the tail of a horse by the son of that castellan, his brains were quickly dashed out and he was then placed on the gallows. Now he was called Robert and surnamed Manducans and was a rich and upright man. But the steward of the Vidame mentioned above and called, I believe, Everard, who slew his master on the very day he had eaten with him, the servant his

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master, was exalted to great heights of arrogance. Others too were done to death in similar ways. It is an impossible task to ravel out all that happened anywhere in the punishment inflicted on monks and secular. But it should be known that on the day after the slaughter, that is, on the sixth day, Thomas came into the city and left on the Sabbath, and on Sunday, God quickly sent punishment on them for their great crime.

These events took place in the year 1115 of the Incarnation of our Lord, on the sixth day of Easter and the 30th of April. Assuredly that Bishop was of unbounded levity, so that whatever foolish and worldly thought he conceived, his tongue very readily gave him absolution. Certainly I saw that cousin whom I have mentioned, conducting herself when recently married with the greatest possible modesty ; but he in my hearing called her a coarse hoyden, because she absented herself from the talk and sight of strangers, and was far from forcing herself on his notice like other women. Certainly too, I had written a book on the Crusade to Jerusalem, which, he desiring to see it, was sent to him, but he was much displeased with it, because he saw it was dedicated in the introduction to my Lord, the Bishop Lisiard of Soissons. After that he would deign to read no more, whereas he had valued my other works more than I deserved. And although he was so successful in gathering wealth, he quickly squandered the whole of it on useless causes. But those evils came to early fruition in his times.

It should be known that evil flourished not in him alone, but resulted from the great wickedness of others too, in fact of the whole population. For in the whole of France there nowhere occurred such

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crimes as amongst the people of Laon. A very little time before these things happened, a certain priest whilst sitting in his own house near the fire, was struck from behind and killed by a servant with whom he had been too familiar. Taking up the body he hid it in a more secret chamber, locking it up. And when after some days, because of the disappearance of his master, people asked the servant where he had gone, he lied to them, saying the man had gone on business somewhere. And when, by reason of the unusual stench, the body could no longer be kept in the house, having collected his master's property and laid the body face downwards on the ashes of the house fire and thrown down the shelf hanging above, which they call the drying-shelf, that it might be thought its fall had crushed him, he then fled away with the goods.

The Deans also just before the first of the month used to transact the business of the priests in their districts. And when a certain Burgundian priest, very talkative and ready, had accused the priest next to him of some trifling matter, the Dean fined him for the offence only sixpence. He, being more than a little annoyed at the fine, when the Burgundian returned home at night, the priest who had lost the money, lay in wait for him. And he, climbing the steps to his house with a lantern, was struck on the head by the other from behind and died of the blow, intestate.

Another also a priest at Essey, catching a priest celebrating mass before the altar, ordered his attendant to shoot him down with an arrow. Although he did not die of the wound, yet the author and cause of it was not guiltless of a crime of murder and a sacrilege unheard of among Christians. Other such

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acts are related, done at the same time and in the same parts.

There appeared also visions foreshowing the calamities I have described. A man thought he saw a moon-shaped ball fall over Laon, which meant that a sudden rebellion would arise in the city. Some one of our monks also saw before the knees of the crucifix in the chapel of the Blessed Mary three great bars in order placed opposite. Moreover, the place where Gerard perished, seemed to be covered with blood. The crucifix signified someone high up in the church, who was truly opposed by three bars, his poor entry on office, his sin against Gerard and, lastly, against the people, being the offences that brought about his end. That place in which Gerard had perished was covered with blood in that the wickedness done was wiped out by no punishment. Besides there were heard, I have learnt from the monks of St. Vincent, certain noises, it was supposed of malignant spirits, and there was the appearance of flames in the air at night in the city. There was born also some days before a boy who was double down to the buttocks, having that is, two heads and right down to the loins two bodies, each with its own arms: being double, therefore, above, it was single below. After it was baptised, it lived three days. In short, many portents were seen to occur, about which there was no doubt that they foreboded the great disaster which ensued.

CHAPTER XII

AFTER the storm had died away into a calm for a little while and the church began to be restored by the zeal

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of the clergy, as the wall, where Gerard was killed, seemed to be more weakened by the violence of the fire than the rest, they built at great cost some arches between the middle wall that had been most damaged and the outer structure. And one night with the sound of a great crash it was so shattered by a thunder-bolt, that the arches joining the wall were torn asunder and the wall partly inclined out of the perpendicular had now to be pulled down from the foundations. O wondrous judgment of God ! Why does Thy stern wrath, O Lord, pass sentence on such things, when Thou didst allow a man standing in prayer to Thee of some sort to be punished, if an unfeeling wall under which that act was done, was not suffered to go unpunished ? Nor was Thy displeasure at such a wrong itself a wrong, O Lord. Assuredly if my enemy lay at my knees to ask pardon and thus were slain by his enemy before my feet, at such an insult put upon me my wrath against the first would certainly be laid at rest. Thus we men, and Thou the very fount of mercy, O God ! If Thou dost crown those little children that in Herod's time were utterly ignorant of Thee just because Thou didst cause their destruction, must we believe Thou couldst harden Thy heart against him, sinner and undeserving as he was, who was killed in contempt of Thy name ? Such is not Thy way, Infinite Goodness.

Meanwhile, in accordance with that custom, such as it is, of begging for money, the feretories and relics of the Saints began to be carried round. And so it came to pass that the Gracious Judge who comforts with His pity here those whom He reproved there, shewed many miracles where they went. Now there was a splendid amulet that was carried with a casket of great note which contained part of the shift of

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the Virgin Mother and of the sponge lifted to the lips of the Saviour and of His Cross and, I believe some of the hair of the Virgin Lady. It was made of gold and gems and verses written on it in gold told of the wonders within. And so in their second journey coming to the canton of Tours, they arrived at the township of a certain robber called Buzençais and had speech with the people, among other things, about the disaster to their church. And when our clergy saw that the lord and the townspeople were evilly-minded on hearing their words, and coming out of the castle intended to plunder us, one of us who was charged with that duty, speaking from an elevation, although he had no belief in his promises, said to the people standing near, "If there is any infirm soul among you, let him come to these holy relics and drinking the water which the relics have touched, he shall forthwith be healed."

Then the lord and his men of the castle were glad, thinking they must be caught for liars out of their own mouths and they bring forward to him a youth twenty years old, who was deaf and dumb. On that the danger and dismay of the clergy cannot be described. But after earnest prayer, with deep sighs to the Lady of all, and her only Son, the Lord Jesus, when he had drunk the holy water and had been asked by the trembling priest some question or other, he replied not with an answer to the question, but with a repetition of the exact words which the priest had used. For never having heard what was said to him, he was ignorant of any words but those just used. Why waste words? In that poor town their hearts became suddenly larger than their means. The lord of the town gave the only horse he had, whilst the liberality of the rest almost went beyond their powers.

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And so the men they had intended to betray, these in fear of God their helper and with much weeping they sent on their way, making over to them the youth who had been cured, to guard the sacred relics. Him I saw in this our church of Nogent, a man of dull intellect, awkward in speech and understanding, who faithfully carried round that miracle-worker and died not long afterwards in the discharge of that duty.

In the city of Angers there was a woman who had married, when a girl, and had kept the ring placed on her finger, whilst very young, almost without ever taking it off. As years went on and the girl grew to a fuller habit of body, the flesh rising up on each side of the ring, had almost covered the metal and hence she had given up all hope of getting it off her finger. Now when the holy relics came there and she went with other women after the sermon to make offerings, as she held out her hand to place the money she had brought, on the relics, the ring cracked and slipped from her hand amongst them. Beyond all description were the offerings of money by the people and of rings and necklaces by the women after they had seen and especially the women, how the Virgin Mother had shewn such favour to that woman in what she dared not ask herself. The canton of Tours had much joy at this showering of the sweet odours of our Lady's merits, who is common to all, but the people of Anjou always boasted that in a special sense did the Mother of God belong to them.

¶ At another place—I cannot exactly say in what town it happened, but in the same diocese—the relics were taken by the clergy to a certain honourable lady at her own urgent prayer, who had long been in the grasp of a lasting and hopeless infirmity. And when she had done adoration to the relics and had drunk

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the holy water with which they had been washed, at once by Mary's healing she was restored to health. And after she had done honour with due offerings to God's sacred relics and their bearer had left the threshold of her house, behold, a boy on a horse drawing a cart behind, filled the middle of the narrow lane through which he had to pass. To him the cleric said, "Halt, while the holy relics pass by." And when the bearer had passed and the boy began to urge his horse forward, he was unable to continue his journey in any direction. And he who bore the relics, looking back that way, said, "Go on, in the name of the Lord." That said, horse and cart at once moved on. See what power Thou dost grant in Mary and what respect she demands for herself!

In the third journey it befell that they came to the castle at Nelle. Now Ralph, the lord of the castle, had in his house a deaf and dumb youth, who, they say, had the art of divination, learnt no doubt from devils, and whom, it is said, he much loved. Now the relics were brought into the castle and honoured by the people with quite moderate gifts. But the deaf and dumb man, who had been informed by signs of the curing of the aforesaid deaf and dumb, and had actually seen him, gave his shoes to a poor man and, bare-footed, with penitent heart, followed the relics as far as the monastery of Lihons. And as he watched during the day under the feretory, it happened to be the hour for dinner. And so most of the clergy went to their meat and only a few remained to guard the relics. These having gone for a short walk outside the church, on returning, found the man stretched on the ground in much distress, with blood and matter flowing from his mouth and ears. The clergy, seeing this, told their companions who had gone to dinner,

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urging them to come quickly to see the wonder. Then coming to himself out of his fit, he was examined by the clergy in some words or other to see if he could speak. Quickly he replied in the same words as he had heard his questioner use. What praise without limit did they render to God on high, with joy passing words ! And lastly they were compelled to return to the town of Nelle, that the poor first offering might be amply increased. And that was done to a wonderful degree. Here, too, our Lady glorified herself, her Divine Son completing those gifts of nature which thus far had been withheld.

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER that they determined to journey to the parts overseas, and having travelled down to the ocean straits and found certain wealthy merchants with fleets for that voyage, they were carried across with good fortune, as far as the weather was concerned. But behold, they see the vessels of fierce pirates, whom they much feared, coming on directly against them. And as they steered towards them with oars sweeping the waters and their prow cutting through the waves and were now scarcely a furlong off, the carriers of the relics, being in great fear of the pirates, there rose in their midst one of our priests, who, lifting on high the casket in which the relics of the Queen of Heaven were kept, forbade their approach in the name of the Son and of the Mother. At once at that command the pirate craft fell astern driven off as speedily as they had with eagerness approached. Then was there thanksgiving among the delivered and much glorifica-

tion, and the merchants with them offered many gifts to the gracious Mary.

They had a fair voyage then to England, and when they were come to Winchester, many miracles done therein brought renown. At Exeter events not unlike these occurred and produced many gifts. Let me pass over the ordinary healing of sickness and touch only on exceptional cases. For we are not writing a Pyrrhic ode on them ; let them do that for themselves ; nor what happened to each person, but are culling outstanding examples. In almost all places they were received with reverence, and according to the means of the people, but when they came to a certain village, they were not admitted by the priest within the church, nor by the people within their dwellings. Two houses they found without inmates and in one they bestowed themselves and their baggage, and fitted up the other for the holy relics. And so, as that wicked people persisted in their obstinacy against the holy things, on the morrow the clergy left that place, and behold the sound of terrible thunder was accompanied by lightning from the clouds, and this, falling on their town, burnt everything to ashes. And, oh, wonderful distinction made by God ! whereas those two houses were in the midst of those that were burnt, they remained for a manifest testimony by God that for their irreverence shewn towards the Mother of God, those unhappy men had suffered from the burning. But that wicked one who had inflamed the cruelty of the barbarians, when he ought to have taught them, after collecting the furniture saved (to his satisfaction) from the heaven-sent fire, carried it away either to the river or the sea, intending to cross over. But there all the property he had gathered together to take across was destroyed on the spot by

lightning. Thus these people of the country, being uninstructed in understanding of the mysteries of God, were taught by their own punishment.

They came to another town in which there was a great fervour of offerings to the sacred relics both by reason of the fame and certainty of the miracles and for many other reasons. A certain Englishman standing in front of the church said to his companion, "Let us go and drink." But the other said, "I have not any money." "I," said the first, "will get some." "How will you get it?" said he. "I think," said the first, "from those clerics, who by their lying and their tricks get so much money out of the silly people. I will certainly manage in some way or other to get out of them the cost of my drink." After saying that, he entered the church and went to the consistory, in which the relics were placed, and pretending he wished to shew his reverence for them by kissing them, putting his mouth against them with his lips open, he sucked up some coins that had been offered. Then, going back to his companion, he said, "Come and let us drink, for we have enough money now for our draught." "How did you get it?" said he, "since you had none before?" "I got it," he said, "by carrying away in my cheek some of the money given to those cheats in the church." "You have done ill," said the other, "in taking that from the holy offerings." "Silence," replied he, "and get along to the nearest tavern. Why so much talk?" They drank the sun down into the ocean. But when evening came on, he who had stolen the money from the holy altar, mounting his horse, said he was going home. And when he had reached a wood near, he made a noose and hanged himself on a tree. There dying a miserable death, he paid the penalty for his

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sacrilegious lips. Out of the many things which the queenly Virgin did in England be it sufficient to have culled these instances.

At Laon also, after they had returned from collecting money, I have been told by a cleric of good character, who had the duty of carting wood for the repair of the fabric of the church, that in ascending the hill one of the oxen through weariness broke down. The cleric, being much vexed with the ox and unable to get another to put in its place, behold, suddenly an ox was seen running up, as if purposely offering itself to help in the work. And when he had with the others speedily drawn the cart right up to the church, the cleric was very anxious to know to whom he should return the strange ox. But as soon as the ox was unyoked, it did not wait for anyone to lead it or to urge it forward, but returned quickly to the place from which it came.

He who told me that, also related at the same time the following story, namely, that on that day on which Gaudry the Bishop, after arranging for the death of Gerard, set out on his journey to Rome, this man (a deacon) was standing behind the priest at mass, when suddenly, although the day was quite fine and no wind was blowing, the gilded eagle standing on the chest which contains the feretories of the saints, fell with a bound as if violently hurled. From this event they made the following inference, that the chief part of the place, that is, the Bishop was going to perish. But in fact, I believe this event also foretold that the greatest city, the most royal amongst all the cities of France, had fallen, ay, and would, I suppose, fall still lower. For in that crisis of the state which we have described, the King himself, of whose avarice it came, did not once again visit it.

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Moreover, the King's Governor, who was aware of the wickedness that was to be done, having sent on his concubine and his children, left the city a few hours before the rebellion broke out in it, and before he had gone three or four miles, saw it blazing.

CHAPTER XIV

AND so the Bishop, having died in this manner, they began to approach the King for the election of another. Without any previous election they were given the Dean of Orleans, because a certain Stephen who had influence with the King and was unable to get a bishopric himself, wanted the deanery, and so obtained the Bishopric for the Dean and got the deanery himself. And when he was brought to be consecrated, and they took divination about him, they came on a blank page; as though it had been prophesied about him, "I will prophesy nothing about him, since his acts will be almost nothing." For a few months after he died. Yet he restored some of the bishop's house. When he died, one was elected lawfully against his will. Lawfully, I say, in this respect, that he took office without paying for it, nor had he any wish to have dealings in simony. And yet at his divination the chapter of the Gospel sounded harsh, for this is what Gaudry got, "Know that a sword shall pierce through thy soul." Be it known to God what misfortune threatens him.

But before we pass on to other matters, we ought to say that Teudeguld, the betrayer and slayer of the Bishop, two years after that slaughter, was captured by Enguerrand and brought to the gallows. He was

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taken in Lent just after he had eaten and drunken almost to vomiting and had made a wicked vaunt before some that he was full of the glory of God, sticking out his belly and stroking it with his hand. And being taken and cast into prison he sought pardon neither of God nor man and even when brought out for his punishment, said nothing to anyone, dying with that insensibility towards God with which he had lived. Now let me return to what I omitted.

Now Thomas, who in league with that hateful Commune, had protected those wicked murderers first of Gerard and then of the Bishop, his lord and kinsman, as his malice grew unspeakably worse, was attacked with frequent anathemas by all the archbishops and bishops throughout France, not only in councils, synods and royal courts, but afterwards every Sunday in every parish and deanery. Moreover, his stepmother, that woman evilly taken by Enguerrand, having a nature more cruel than a wild she-bear's, and seeing Thomas become a sort of rival to herself, induced Enguerrand to forswear all fatherly love towards him and even a father's name. And having begun by her woman's cunning to keep him out of his rights and to shew herself his open enemy, she then took in hand, in the words of the comic poet, to drive him from folly into insanity. Steeped, therefore, in worse wickedness from day to day, such madness broke out in his soul that he regarded it as right and lawful to treat men as beasts in his attacks on them. For because he was unjustly disinherited by a woman, it was esteemed right by him and his confederates to indulge in an orgy of slaughter. Daily with ever new devices did that savage woman look for enemies to set up for his ruin ; he on the other hand never took holiday from his

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unceasing pursuit of plunder, burning and slaughter against her. In our generation we have never seen two persons anywhere under whose single rule so many evils have arisen. For if he was the fire, she might be called the oil.

Such, certainly, was the character of each that although they were equally given up to lustful acts, yet none the less, nay, even more, when opportunity offered, did they shew their cruelty. For whereas no marriage ties bound him, he could not be kept by a single wife from the rivalry of harlots and strange women. Why say more ? She daily drove him on by her plots, and he by the murder of innocent men could not satisfy his rage, so much so that in one day he put out the eyes of ten men, whose fate it was soon to die ; and so it came about that both being wearied they made a momentary peace. But after a little the woman kindling again the old troubles, they broke out again into mutual slaughters.

Now when the province of Laon was shaken with the quarrels of these two, disaster by the judgment of God passed on to Amiens. For after the fatal event of the destruction of Laon the people of Amiens having won over the King by a bribe, formed a Commune, which the Bishop ought under no compulsion whatever to have favoured, and especially as no one pressed him to do so, and he was well aware of the miserable end of his fellow-bishop and of the conflict of the unhappy citizens. Enguerrand therefore, the Count of the city, seeing that by the conspiracy of the citizens the ancient rights of his office were being destroyed, now with all his might made an armed attack on the rebels. He was well supported by Adam, so-named, and the castle commanded by him. Being repulsed therefore, by the citizens, he retired

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into the castle. And they attacking the castle with unceasing assaults, called upon Thomas as their loving lord to take the oath to the Commune, in this way probably stirring up the son against the father ; for having a shameful mother, he was therefore void of love for his father. And so Enguerrand thinking the innkeepers and butchers despised him for the sluggishness of old age, summoned Thomas and came to terms with him, even reconciling him to his step-mother by taking any number of oaths to ingratiate the two with one another. She, no doubt, was not inactive on her own behalf to exact from him considerable treasure in return for the new peace.

At last, having exhausted the great riches that he had accumulated, Thomas also promised help to Enguerrand against the citizens, with whom the Bishop and the Count were contending. Thomas therefore, and Adam, the Captain of the Tower began to be very active in their attack on the Vidame and the citizens. And as they charged the Bishop and the clergy with taking part with the citizens, they very soon possessed themselves of church property. And in one of his manors he set up a strong garrison by means of which he wasted the rest with fire and sword. Having carried off from one of them a very great number of prisoners and much money, the remainder, a great assemblage of both sexes and all ages which had fled there, he burnt in the church, which had been set on fire. Now among the prisoners was one, a hermit, who had come to the manor to buy bread, and being taken, was brought before him. Now the feast of the Blessed Martin was close at hand, in fact the next day. When he, therefore, with tears declared to Thomas what his profession was, and why he had come there, begging him to

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have pity on him through respect for St. Martin, if for nothing else, he, drawing his sword from the sheath, drove it through his breast and heart, saying, "Take that for St. Martin's sake." Likewise they had thrust a leper into prison; and a settlement of lepers in the province hearing of it besieged the doors of the tyrant, crying out for their comrade to be restored to them. But he threatened that if they did not go away he would burn them alive. Fleeing in fright, when they had reached a safe place and had gathered together from every quarter, they called on God to avenge them and lifting up their voices, they all together cursed him. But that same leper died in the prison where he was punished.

A woman also who was with child, being put to hard labour in the prison, died there. Some of the prisoners travelled too slowly and he ordered the bones under their necks, called the collar-bones, to be pierced, and had cords inserted through the holes in five or six of them, and so made them travel in terrible torture; and after a little they died in captivity. Why prolong the story? In that affair he slew with his own sword thirty persons. But his step-mother, seeing the man putting himself in such peril, and greedy for his destruction, sent word to the Vidame to keep secret watch on Thomas's outgoings. Being caught in an ambush, when going out on some expedition, Thomas was covered with wounds and pierced through the thigh by the lance of a footman, but the Vidame amongst other hurts being badly wounded in the knee had to abandon the attempt, sorely against his will.

Now, before his church suffered such destruction, the Bishop on a feast day was about to celebrate mass. But the priest before him, apparently a

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religious, had unwittingly made the sacrament of water alone, and after him the same thing happened to the Bishop. And when he had tasted and found it was nothing but water, he said, "Be sure, some great misfortune threatens this church." And this was also to be inferred from the misfortune that occurred to the priest before this. When, therefore, he saw that his presence was acceptable neither to his own clergy nor to the people, because he could be of no use to anyone, taking a certain monk of ours into his confidence, and without consulting any of his own clergy or the people, he gave a bill of divorcement from his see, as it were, and sent back his ring and sandals to the Archbishop of Rheims, sending word that he would go into exile and never thereafter be Bishop again anywhere. Thus becoming an ex-prelate he went to Cluny, and there again acting as bishop of his own accord, consecrated an altar. Leaving that place he proceeded to Chartres, of which place something has been said in the beginning of this work. There remaining outside the convent in a cell, he kept with him six silver marks of his travelling money. After two months, being recalled not by any of his people, but by the Archbishop, he was not slow to return ; he knew he would find these marks useful for the purpose. The clergy and people, however, did not give him a glad reception, for in his absence they were busy choosing another bishop with considerable scorn for himself. For he had started a disturbance which he could not lay to rest.

Thomas, therefore, being taken to his own place and powerless to do anything by reason of the aforesaid wound, as the son of Adam, a very handsome youth had betrothed himself to his daughter, Enguer-

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rand's shameful concubine besides the injury already done to Thomas prepares to turn her arms against Adam and his tower. Now he so far had been faithfully supported against the citizens by Enguerrand. But now the latter betrayed the King and beleaguered the tower. And certainly Adam had taken the oath of fealty to the King and had not been traitor to him, and the King had taken him under his protection. Indescribable even by those who were involved in its dangers, was the slaughter inflicted on the citizens by those of the tower, not only before the siege, but still more frequently afterwards. For there was nothing that could be done by the townspeople, except to suffer. Now this in the beginning, before the trouble had gone far, might easily have been settled by Godfrey, the Bishop, as every one knew, had he not been afraid of the Vidame, who always held him in the greatest contempt. He was plainly of such a character as to respect no one and to do no one a kindness who did not abuse him or do him an injury. The man who tries to please a treacherous foe in fear of being bitten, by the just judgment of heaven gets hurt by him and everyone else.

Now Thomas could not bring help to the tower, into which he had sent his daughter and the most trustworthy of his soldiers. He had done such evil deeds everywhere that archbishops and heads of churches made complaint to the King saying that they would not carry on the services of God in his realm, unless he took vengeance on him. For at the time when the pestilent fellow was backing the citizens against Enguerrand, Walter, about whom we have spoken, who, with Guy his fellow-archdeacon, was the only one left of the betrayers of Gerard, had gone about the middle of^{*} Lent to see that worthy

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associate of Enguerrand, his own uterine sister, having himself forwarded that adulterous connection. When Thomas found this out, sending a hasty message, he ordered Robert, the worst of criminals, (for such servants he loved), to watch for Walter returning from Amiens and to kill as many as he could. And he looking out for them nowhere else than from the hill of Laon itself over the hollow road where it descends from the hill, made an onset on him with his men. Now Walter, having sent his company on ahead, was following into the city riding on a mule. Caught thus alone he was most cruelly cut to pieces by their swords. After killing him they returned to Thomas with the mule, in merry mood.

The King's ears therefore, being continually assailed with the loud complaints of the churches on this and like matters, in Lent of the following year after the slaying of the archdeacon, he collected an army against Thomas and attacked the garrison which he had set up in the manors of the abbey of St. John. But hardly any hearty help was given by those of the knightly order, whose numbers too, were small; but a very large force of light-armed troops joined him. Thomas hearing that these were being raised against him, cursed his fate in being laid up utterly helpless in bed. Warned by the King to destroy the adulterine castles, he contemptuously refused and was loudly exultant when help was offered to him by many of his kinsman. Then the Archbishop and the Bishops, going up on high platforms, invited the mob to join, and after admonishing and absolving them from their sins, ordered them as an act of penitence in full assurance of the salvation of their souls to attack the castle called Crecy; and they with wonderful daring went up against it. Now the fortress was

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of unusual strength, so that to many all their efforts seemed ridiculous. In spite of a vigorous defence the King captured the first line, gained a footing at the very gate of the castle and warned the townspeople to surrender it to him. On their refusal, stretching out his hand, he swore that he would not eat until it was taken. For all that he drew back from the assault. On the morrow, however, he returned and assaulted, although hardly any of the men-at-arms were willing to take part. Having charged them with open mutiny and called upon the infantry, he was himself the first to set foot on the rampart and to fight his way inside. Quickly they forced their way in, an immense quantity of victual was found, the defenders taken and the town destroyed.

Not far from here was another town named Nogent. The keys of this were given up to the King and the inhabitants fled. At Crecy some of the prisoners were hanged on the gallows to terrify the defenders, others put to death in other ways. Of the assailants I do not know that any one perished but one man-at-arms. But Thomas defended himself at Marne and having paid a money ransom to the King and the royal party, and come to an agreement for the damage done to the churches, gave himself up to peace and the Commune. Thus the proudest and most wicked of men was now punished through the act of the very poorest class, whom he had often punished and scorned. I must not fail to mention that when the King came to Laon, there was unseasonable weather through the mildness of the air. Then the Archbishop said to them, "Let us pray to God, if it is His will, that what we have proposed, should be done, to give us a clear sky." No sooner was this said than the weather became fair.

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Now Godfrey the Bishop having returned from Chartres, began to spread abroad something far different from what he had learnt there. He appealed to the King then, and on a day that was famous and venerated, preached a sermon more like one of Cati-line's speeches than one that proceeded from God, inciting him and the people standing by against the men of the Tower, promising the kingdom of heaven to those who should die in the assault upon it. Next day in front of the wall of the Castellio, as it is called, great towers were brought forward and soldiers placed in them. Those of the castle had protected themselves with hides to prevent the taking of the heart of their defence. But the Bishop had gone bare-footed to St. Aceolus, undeserving of a hearing in such a cause. Meantime, the people of the castle allowed them to approach and to move up the towers. But when they had brought these into action, Aleran, who was most skilled in such work, opposed to them two catapults which he had set up, and arranged at their posts eighty women to hurl the stones placed in them. The soldiers inside also fought in close combat with the assailants. And whilst they, with the spirit of Achilles defended their ramparts, the women with equal courage hurled stones from the catapults and shattered both of the towers. And as the shower of missiles grew hotter, eighty, it is said, being wounded, the King himself was hurt by a shaft on his mailed breast. Of those, too, who were pierced with arrows, only one was saved. This was related to me by Rothard, a cleric, the nephew of the Bishop.

But the soldiers high up in the wooden towers, seeing themselves overwhelmed, began to retreat, and at once the rest followed them. Soon after they

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had been driven back, the defenders sallied out, destroyed the towers and dragged the timbers inside, whilst from some way off nearly three thousand looked on and did not dare to attack, they who had been the first themselves to attack. Seeing therefore, that the place was impregnable, the King retreated, ordering it to be blockaded until the defenders should surrender under the compulsion of famine. Until now the blockade goes on and it cannot be said how many of the citizens alone perish almost daily. But Adam encamped outside the outskirts of the city, presses Enguerrand and the Vidame with constant hostilities. Hence if tribulation could open the ears to understanding, they might know that although Thomas was beaten, all cases are not equal, nor are the judgments of God the same for all men so that a bishop should be free to incite others to murder.

CHAPTER XV

BEFORE we pass on to our next topic, since we are about to say something about the people of Soissons, you must know that the conduct of the people of Laon surpasses all the provinces of France in its abomination. For besides their murder of priests, bishop and archdeacon, quite recently a very wise woman of good birth, the Abbess of St. John and a benefactor of the church, named Raisendis, a native of Laon, was killed by her own serf and bore what she suffered through her loyalty to the church. Even the church itself could not keep them from sacrilege. We consider the following worthy of notice, because the Queen of all did not leave the deed unpunished.

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The vessels of the table-service began to be filched, by those called the enrolled, who were specially entrusted with keeping the church treasures but they threw back the blame on the clerics, their masters. It is certain, however, that the culprits were laymen. This is the first tale I have heard. Secondly a certain Anselm, sprung from the common people of the city, an uncouth rustic man, during the days of Christmas before matins stole crosses, cup and all golden vessels. And after a time he took a lump of the stolen gold to sell to a merchant of Soissons, revealing the sacrilegious theft committed by him, but making him swear he would not betray him. Meantime, however, the other heard that those party to the theft were being excommunicated throughout the parishes of Soissons. Knowing this, he went to Laon and gave information to the clergy. Why say more? The thief when examined, denied it. The other gave bail and challenged him to a duel. No objection was raised. It was Sunday. The battle began then, being hastened on by the cleric, and he who had charged the other with theft was vanquished and fell. In this matter two things are evident. Either he who broke his oath in giving information of the theft, did not act rightly, or, what is much more certain, he obeyed a law that was entirely wrong. For it is certain that no canon agrees with this law of combat.

At last, Anselm, feeling safer after this victory, broke out into a third sacrilege. With inexpressible daring he burst open the treasure-chest and carried off great quantities of gold and jewels. After this theft, as the ordeal of the holy water was now frequently practised, he was thrown into it with others of the enrolled and was convicted by his floating at

the top and others too, who were parties to the first theft; and some were brought to the gallows and others spared. He, when so treated, promised to tell, but when set free, refused. Being a second time carried to the gallows, he swore to reveal the facts. Again loosed, he said, "Without a reward I will do nothing." "You shall be hanged," they said. "And you will get nothing by that," said he. Meantime, he cast endless abuse at Nicholas, the castellan, son of Guinimar, a young man of note by whom this was done. The Bishop and Master Anselm were consulted what was to be done. "It is better," say they, "that money should be given to him than that the whole of the gold should be lost." Therefore, they agreed to pay him about five hundred shillings. On that promise being made, he restored the gold, much of which he had hidden in his vineyard. But he had undertaken to leave the country and the Bishop had given him three days' grace for doing so. Wishing to get away secretly in this time, he examined beforehand all the roads leading out of the city, and there appeared on one side of his house a vision of great floods which entirely prevented all progress. The streams, therefore, that had invisibly been sent against him, compelled him to go back openly without stealing off with his gains. Returning, he declared with many furious words that he would not go away, and when the Bishop urged him, being driven out of his senses, he began to mutter, saying that he knew something more which he had refrained from revealing. When the Bishop learnt this through the Vidame, he took the opportunity, as he had sworn he knew nothing more, to deprive him of the money he had proposed to give him, and threw him into prison. And he being

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put to the torture, confessed he had in his possession some jewels of filigree work. Then taking them to the place he shewed them in a linen cloth under a stone. With all these he had also stolen some sacred caskets, which he had kept for a long time, but was unable to sleep, because he was seized with great horror at his sacrilege through the distraction of his wicked mind by the saints. Therefore, he too was lifted on high and sent to his fathers, who were certainly the devils.

CHAPTER XVI

MEANTIME, John, the Count of Soissons—to turn my pen now to what I promised—was a skilful general, but a lover of peace, whose only motive was his own profit. Now the wickedness of his father and his grandfather was always exerted for the ruin of Mother Church. Moreover, the mother of John among other wonderful exhibitions of her power, caused the tongue of a deacon to be cut out of his throat and his eyes to be put out. No doubt she was emboldened to do this by the daring of a parricide for with the help of a certain Jew she had poisoned her own brother through greed for his earldom. Because of that the Jew was burnt and, as for herself, the day before the beginning of Lent, after dining exceedingly well, she was stricken with paralysis in the night in her first sleep and lost the use of her tongue and all power in the rest of her body ; and what was worst of all, after that she had no understanding of the things of God and lived henceforth the life of a pig. Also by the judgment of God her tongue was almost cut out in the attempt to cure her. So she remained

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from the beginning of Lent to the octave of Easter, when she died. Now between her and this John and the Bishop, her sons, there was not only quarrelling but deadly hatred of a very real kind. For in this family there was mutual hatred between succeeding generations. At any rate, when she was carried to her grave and whilst she was being buried, the Count related about her what has been recorded above, adding, "Why should I waste money on her soul, when she was unwilling to do it herself?"

In the end, the Count, to whom it might properly have been said, "Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite," not only became as bad as his parents, but did things much worse. To such an extent did he practise the wicked infidelity of the Jews and heretics that he did, what is for Jews the indubitable test of the faithful, the utterance of blasphemy about the Saviour. How evilly he set his mouth against heaven, may be understood from that little work which I wrote against him at the request of Bernard the Dean. And since such words may not be uttered by a Christian's lips, and must cause pious ears to shudder with detestation, we suppress them. Although he praised the Jews, by the Jews he was regarded as a madman, and whilst approving of their religion in word, he actually practised ours.

And it so happened that at Christmas and Easter and such times he shewed such humility that we could hardly believe he was a pervert. On the eve of Easter he had gone to watch in the church and had suggested to a certain cleric that he should tell him something about the mystery of those days. And when he had explained how the Lord had suffered and how He rose again, the Count shrilly laughing

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said, "What a fable, what windy talk!" "If you," said the other, "regard as wind and fable what I have said, why are you watching here?" "I am gladly waiting," said he, "for the beautiful women who watch with you here." And certainly although he had a young and beautiful wife, he scorned her and was so in love with a wrinkled old woman that, whereas he had a bed in the house of a certain Jew, he could never be restricted to a bed, but thrust himself and that filthy person into any foul corner or at any rate, some cupboard, in his raging lust. Again he ordered a certain parasite, when the lamps had been put out to go and lie with his own wife, pretending to be himself, that he might fasten on her a charge of adultery. But she perceiving it was not the Count through the difference in person (for the Count was disgustingly scabby) she hardily repelled the rascal with all the strength she had, aided by her tirewoman. Why say more? He made no exception of nun and sister in his abuse of women, nor did he ever spare them the rivalry of the holy brothers.

When the Virgin Mother, Queen of all, could no longer endure the blasphemies of this corrupt man, as he was returning from a royal expedition, on approaching the city, there appeared a great band of his friends, the devils, and he coming home with his hair disordered and out of his wits, repulsed his wife and lay with that old woman and that night fell ill of a mortal disease. And when he began to be in great pain, he consulted the aforesaid cleric, with whom he had kept the watch, on an examination of his water. And he in reply spoke of his death and reproached him for his lustful acts, to which he replied, "Do you want me to pay up to those leeches?"—meaning the priests. "Not one farthing.

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I have learnt from many wiser persons than you, that all women ought to be in common and that this sin is of no consequence." Thus he spoke and all that he said or did afterwards, was in delirium. For in trying to drive away his wife standing by him, with a kick, he inflicted such a blow on a soldier as to knock him over. Therefore the hands of the madman were bound, that he might not tear himself and his people to pieces, until he became weak and the devils wrested from him his soul that was the enemy of the Virgin Mother and her Son.

CHAPTER XVII

BUT since we have mentioned the heretics whom this abominable man loved, a certain man of the country, named Clement, lived with his brother Everard at Bussy, the next manor to Soissons. He, as was commonly reported, was one of the heads of the heresy. About him that foul Count used to say he had found none wiser. But the heresy is not one that openly defends its faith, but condemned to everlasting whispers, spreads secretly. The following is said to be the sum of it.

They acknowledge that the rule of the Son of the Virgin has no reality.

They annul the baptism of young children not yet of an understanding age under godfathers and godmothers.

Moreover, they speak of God's own Word which comes into being by some rigmarole of talk or other.

They so abominate the mystery which is enacted on

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our altar that they call the mouths of all the priests the mouth of hell.

And if they sometimes receive our sacrament to hide their heresy, they so order their diet as to eat nothing more that day.

They do not separate their cemeteries from other land as being sacred in comparison.

They condemn marriage and propagation by intercourse.

And certainly wherever they are scattered over the Latin world, you may see men living with women without marriage and yet calling them wives, but not keeping to one only, but they are known to lie men with men and women with women.

They abstain from all food which is produced by sexual generation.

Conventicula faciunt in hypogeis aut penetralibus abditis, sexus simul indifferens, qui candelis accensis cuidam mulierculae sub obtutu omnium, relectis, it dicitur, natibus, procumbenti eas a tergo offerunt; hisque mox extinctis chaos undecunque conclamant, et cum ea quae ad manum venerit prima quisque coit.

Quod si inibi femina gravidetur, partu demum in idipsum reditur.

A great fire is lighted and a child passed from hand to hand, as they sit in a circle round it, is thrown through the flames until he is dead. Then he is reduced to ashes and the ashes made into bread. To each person a portion is given as a sacrament, and once that has been received, hardly any one gives up that heresy.

If you review the heresies described by Augustine, you will find this like none of them so much as that of the Manichaeans. This which first originated among

the more learned classes, reached the country population in a debased form ; they priding themselves on keeping up the apostles' manner of life esteem only the reading of their Acts.

Two of these heretics were brought under examination by the very famous Lord Bishop of Soissons, and when they were charged by the Bishop with forming congregations outside the church and were said to be heretics by their neighbours, Clement replied, " Have ye not read, masters, where it is written in the Gospel ' Beati eritis ' ? " For being illiterate he thought " eritis " meant heretics. He believed also that they were called " heretics " as being without doubt " heritors " of God. When, therefore, they were examined about their belief, they gave most Christian answers, but did not deny their meetings. But as it is the way with such to deny charges and always in secret to draw away the hearts of the dull-witted, they were sentenced to the ordeal of exorcised water. And as it was being got ready, the Bishop asked me to extract from them privately their opinions, and I, proposing to them the subject of infant baptism, they said, " He that believeth and hath been baptised, shall be saved." And when I perceived that a fair saying covered a good deal of wickedness, I asked what they thought of those who are baptised in the faith of others. And they, " In God's name do not expect us to search so deeply." And enumerating the separate heads, " We believe all that you mention." Then remembering that verse to which the Priscillianists formerly agreed, that is, " Do not betray oaths, perjuries, secrets," (August. *On Heresies*.) I said to the Bishop, " Since the witnesses are not present who heard them expressing such opinions, bring them to the ordeal

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as determined ;” for there was a certain lady whose head Clement had turned. There was also a deacon who had heard from the mouth of the man other wicked statements.

And so the Bishop celebrated mass and from his hand they received the sacrament in the following terms : “ Let the body and blood of the Lord try you this day.” This done, that most pious Bishop and the Archdeacon Peter, a man of great honesty, who had scorned the promises they had made to escape the ordeal, proceeded to the water. The Bishop with many tears recited the litany and then pronounced the exorcism. After that they took oath that they had never believed or taught anything contrary to our faith. Clement being then thrown into the tun floated on the top like a stick. This being seen the whole church was filled with unbounded joy. So great an assembly of both sexes had the fame of this brought together, such as no one present remembered ever to have seen. The other confessed his error, but being impenitent, was thrown into prison with his convicted brother. Two others of the manor of Durmat, proved heretics, had come to look on and were imprisoned with them.

Meanwhile, we went on to the council of Beauvais to consult with the bishops what ought to be done. But in the interval the faithful people fearing weakness on the part of the clergy, ran to the prison, seized them and having lighted a fire under them outside the city, burnt them both to ashes. To prevent the spreading of their cancer, God’s people shewed a righteous zeal against them.

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CHAPTER XVIII

AT Noyons there is a parish church dedicated to the Blessed Nicasius by Alduin, a former bishop. The relics of Nicasius had been taken there by the people of Rheims and for a long time had rested there, I do not mean in the church, but in that city. About five years before this therefore, notice being given that the approaching festival of the martyr was to be duly honoured with a holiday, that day a poor girl living alone with her mother dared to do some needlework. Whilst she was adjusting the work that was to be sewn, with her hands drawing the thread over her tongue and lips in the usual way, the knot in the thread which was quite large, pierced the tip of her tongue like a sharp object so that it was impossible to draw it out. For if any one tried to pluck it out, the wretched girl was tortured with excessive pain. And so accompanied by a crowd of people the unlucky girl went with her mother to the bishop's church to pray for the pity of the Queen of martyrs, but not in spoken words; for with the thread boring a hole in her tongue and hanging from it she could hardly speak. Why more? The mob of people, after they had in tearful commiseration looked upon the girl in her great and continuing pain, returned to their homes. But she that day and the night following persevering in prayer remained in the company of her mother. Next day after assailing the Queen of heaven and earth with heart-felt supplication, and as Ansellus, the priest, the sacristan of the church, told me, the mother leading and the daughter mumbling the responses, they had rehearsed the litany with as much accuracy as if they had been

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learned, the daughter advancing to the altar of the Virgin Mother, embraced it in tears ; and quickly the thread came loose in the midst of her kisses. To the scene of so great a mercy the clergy and people flocked in haste magnifying God and the Virgin Mother in unending praises, since she had proved herself the Queen of Martyrs by avenging herself on a crime committed against a martyr, and yet, when satisfaction was given, allowing her wrath in the end to be assuaged. And not a little was the fame of the martyr made manifest, who by punishment of a poor humble woman made known how great an adversary he is against the proud adverse to him. This was related to me in the very church where it happened, and the thread of remarkable thickness and the knot with the blood still on it were shewn to me by the priest. Something like it occurred in our time on the day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary and is known to have been recorded by Rathodus, Bishop of the city.

In this very church of Nogent, in which by God's will we serve, a knight had committed a robbery in carrying off, that is, cattle belonging to the brothers, and coming to the castle of Calviacum he had roasted one of the oxen to be eaten by himself and his friends. At the first mouthful of the meat that he took, he was stricken by the power of God and in the midst of chewing both his eyes protruded from his face and his tongue from his mouth; and thus condemned, the man in spite of himself had to restore the rest of his booty.

Another was trying to get for his own fishing a part of the neighbouring stream which is called the Ailette belonging of old to the brothers of the abbey. And when one of the brothers, whilst fishing, was

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driven away from that part of the river by the knight and the church was on that account beset with repeated orders, the man was stricken with paralysis in some of his limbs by the powerful Mistress. But when he ascribed this to fortune and not to divine vengeance, as he slept, the Holy Virgin stood by him and gave him some blows in the face not without severity. And he thereupon waking up and being brought to his senses by the blows, came bare-foot to me and begged pardon, shewed what anger the Blessed Mary had directed against him and gave up his wrongful claims. This one thing I learnt, that no one was at enmity with that church, without sustaining certain damage, if he chose to persist in it.

At Compiègne, the king's officer was at enmity with the church of the Blessed Mary, of the Blessed Cornelius and Cyprian. And when the clergy meeting him in the middle of the market-place, in the name of the great Mistress and their great patrons forbade his doing that, he, shewing no respect to the sacred names, confounded the faces of his petitioners by his foul curses ; but in the midst of his speech as he sat on his horse, he was thrown and in a moment found his breeches badly fouled beneath him by a looseness of his bowels.

And as we have begun to speak of the reverence that should be shewn to the saints, there is a town in that district of the bishopric of Beauvais which is called St. Just. In this a rebellion being stirred up, and all the dregs of the populace running riot with the townsmen in outrageous insolence, the clergy of the holy boy and martyr, Justus, brought out the relics in the feretory to quiet the people. And a certain man nothing more than a hanger-on, more ready than the rest, meeting them, irreverently and

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wickedly aimed a blow at that most holy feretory. But sooner than one could say it, he fell to the ground and like that one mentioned above became putrid with the stinking efflux from his body.

In the same district of Beauvais on a certain manor a priest held the cure of a church. And as a countryman pursued him with excessive hatred, he so prevailed against him as to aim at his utter destruction. Because therefore, he could not act openly, he prepared to murder him by poisoning. Having, therefore, cut up a toad, he put it in an earthen jar, in which he used to keep the wine for mass. Now vessels are made for this purpose with a long narrow neck and swelling belly. Coming therefore, to mass, the priest celebrated the holy mysteries with the posioned wine. And at the end of them he began to fall into deadly swoons, to loathe his food and to vomit up all he ate and drank and to waste away. After he had taken to his bed for some time, he at last managed with difficulty to rise and going to the church, he took the vessel which he knew to be the cause of his sickness, and breaking the neck thereof with a knife, poured out the liquid in it on to the pavement. And, lo, there was to be seen a mass of spawn full of tadpoles. Knowing now that his inward parts were doomed to mortify and whilst hopelessly awaiting the fate that threatened him, he received from some one the following advice: "If," said he, "you wish to cast out the deadly germs that have entered into you, ask to have dust brought to you either from the grave of Marcellus, Bishop of Paris, or from his altar, and if you swallow that in water, you may be confident of your immediate recovery." He at once made all haste to do this and swallowed the dust in great gratitude to the saint.

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At once he vomited up lumps of countless reptiles with all the poisonous stuff in which they were embedded, his life was saved and his sickness utterly left him. It is no wonder that Marcellus, now with God, can do this, since he, when separated by the wall of his flesh had wrought as great miracles on similar occasions.

CHAPTER XIX

THE events, unparalleled in our times, which I am about to relate, were told to me by a religious and truly meek-spirited monk, whose name was Geoffrey. Formerly he had been a lord of the castle of Sambre in Burgundy and because his life was known to be quite in agreement with the story, I think it best to give it in his words. Now this is how the story runs. There was a young man in the upper part of the land adjoining his own who had tied himself to a woman, not in conjugal, that is, lawful wedlock, but had her as his paid mistress, as Solinus calls it, that is, in unlawful union. At long last regaining his senses, he had in mind to go on pilgrimage to St. James of Galicia. But into the dough of that pious intention was introduced certain leaven. For carrying the girdle of the woman with him he made evil use of it to remind him of her and he was unrighteously distracted in his righteous service. On the way, therefore, the Devil finding occasion to attack the man appeared to him in the shape of St. James and said, "Whither are you going?" "To St. James," said he. "It is not good for you to go there," said the other, "I am that St. James to whom you are hasten-

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ing, but you are taking with you something which is an insult to my majesty. For having hitherto wallowed in the mire of the worst fornication, you now wish to appear a penitent, and you dare to present yourself before me as though you were offering me the fruit of a good beginning, although you are still girded with the belt of that foul woman of yours." The man flushed with shame at the charge, and believing the other was in truth the Apostle, he said, "I know, lord, that aforetime and even now I have done very shamefully. Tell me, prithee, what counsel you will give to one who throws himself on your clemency." "If you wish," said he, "to bring forth worthy fruit of repentance, according to the shame you have wrought, cut off that member with which you have sinned, for God's sake and mine, and afterwards take your very life, which has been so ill, by cutting your throat." So he spake, and withdrawing himself from sight left the man in a spirit very evil.

Going therefore, at night to his lodging, he hastened to obey the Devil, not the Apostle, as he supposed, who had given him that advice. And so, whilst his companions slept, he first cut off that member, and afterwards plunged the knife in his throat. Hearing the shriek of the dying man and the splash of the flowing blood, his friends awoke and bringing a light saw what had happened to the man. In short, they were grieved to see their friend come by so dismal an end, unwitting what counsel he had taken of the demon. Because, therefore, they were ignorant how that mischance had befallen him, they did not therefore, refuse him their services in burying him; and although in such circumstances it was not the dead man's due, they had mass celebrated for

their dead fellow-traveller's benefit. When this had been faithfully offered up before God, it pleased God to mend the wound in his throat and through his Apostle to restore the dead man to life. Rising up therefore, the man, to the unspeakable amazement of all at his revival, began to speak. And so when those present enquired what was his intention in killing himself, he owned to the appearance of the Devil in the name of the Apostle. Asked what sentence he had received in the spirit in punishment of self-murder, he said, "I was brought before the throne in the presence of Our common Lady, the mother of God, St. James the Apostle too being there. When it was debated before God what was to be done with me and the Blessed Apostle, mindful of my intention, sinner as I was and corrupt hitherto, prayed to that Blessed one in my behalf, she out of her sweet mouth pronounced my sentence, that I, poor wretch, should be pardoned, for that the malice of the Devil had by evil chance under holy guise brought about my ruin. And so it was that for my amendment in this life and for a warning to these by God's command I returned to life." Now the old man who told me this, said he had the tale from one who had seen the man that came back to life. For it was further reported that a plain and distinct scar was left on his throat, which spread the miracle abroad, and the member that had been cut off had a kind of aperture for the passing of water.

There is also a tale often told, but whether committed to writing at any time, I know not, that there was a certain man, who had changed, I believe, a life in the world for the habit of a holy monk and gone into a monastery, and therein taken the oath to that profession. He observing there that the rule

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was kept with less strictness than he approved, obtained leave of the Abbot and betook himself to another monastery where the discipline was better, and there he lived with the greatest possible devotion. Some time afterwards he fell sick and died of that sickness. Passing from the present world he became the subject of controversy of opposing powers in heaven. For whereas the powers against him alleged his breach of his first profession, the argument of the spirits of light relying on the testimony to his good deeds, was pleaded strenuously on the other side. And so the case was carried for hearing to Peter, the doorkeeper of heaven, and forthwith the dispute was referred by him to God for decision. And when it came before Him, the Lord said, "Go ye to Richard, the Justiciar, and take his decision for sentence." Now this Richard was a man of very great power through his earthly possessions, but much more powerful in his firm adherence to right and justice. To Richard they go and state the case and sentence is pronounced by Richard. "Whereas," said he, "he is charged with breaking his vow, he is certainly adjudged guilty of manifest false swearing, nor have the devils an unjust case, although the very righteous conduct of the man is against them; but my decision inspired by heaven, is that he must return to the world to amend those faults." And so he, rising out of death into the upper world, summoned the Abbot and told him what he had seen, confessing publicly his fault in deserting them and breaking his oath, and returned to his first monastery. Hence let every one be assured, who may profess to remain true to God anywhere under whatsoever name, that he should keep the promise made to God and his saints, for he ought not to change his monastery,

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unless he is forced to do wrong by those who have no right over him.

Since it is sometimes useful to speak of the characters of dying men, at Laon a certain man was devoted to the practice of usury wherever he could whose end proves that he had led a life which deserved destruction. For when near to death, he demanded interest from a certain poor woman, who had paid her debt, and she after begging him by his approaching end to remit the interest, which he obstinately refused to do, she being in straits collected all the agreed interest except one penny. And when she begged him to remit that only, he swore he certainly would not. To be brief, she sought for a penny which with the greatest difficulty she managed to find and brought it to him, as in the last conflict between flesh and spirit the death rattle was in his throat. And he taking it in the moment of death, placed it in his mouth, as though it had been the viaticum, and expiring under that protection went to the Devil. Hence his body was deservedly buried in banishment from holy ground.

I will add what happened to a man of similar character in Artois. He had over a long time filled his money bags with ill-gotten gains. At last after heaping up mountains of gold and silver he came to his dying hour. And, lo, the Devil appeared in the guise of a man driving a black ox before him. Standing by the bed of the dying man, he said, "My lord sends you this ox," "Go," said he to his wife, "and prepare a meal for the man who brought the ox, but take the beast inside and have good care of him." So he spoke and at once expired. Meantime, however, the man was sought for to have his dinner and fodder was brought for the ox, but neither of them

could be found. All, therefore, wondered and were afraid at what had happened and considered that no good could come of such gifts. When the funeral was ready and the body placed on the bier, there was a procession of the clergy to the house to perform the usual offices to the dead. But the devils who were celebrating the last rites for their servant, raised such a storm in the air on their coming that a sudden whirlwind in fine weather almost blew in the front of the house and lifted up part of the bier placed in the midst of it. Enough be said of these devourers of the poor.

Let no one be surprised that wicked spirits have much power at this time to mock or to hurt men, for no doubt they do these acts as beasts and not in the name of the Lord. Hence in the district of Vexin not many years ago we find it came to pass that some of the nobles of a certain place were hunting somewhere in the district. Having come, therefore, on a badger that fled to its hole, or rather thinking they had done so, whereas in truth it was the Devil, they catch him in a bag. Using all their might to carry him away and finding him far heavier than is usual with that beast, and night coming on, as they began to take him away, lo, from a hill near rang out a voice through the midst of the wood. "Hearken," it said, "Harken ye!" And very many voices from the other side shouting in reply, "What is it?" the voice again cried, "They are carrying off Cadux here." And perhaps he was deservedly called Cadux as causing many to fall. Thereupon endless troops of demons from all quarters rush out as though to rescue him so that the whole wood seemed to be crowded with their hosts. Throwing down, therefore, the Devil, no badger, which they were carrying and

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almost driven out of their senses they fled ; and reaching their homes in a short time they were all dead.

In the same province a countryman having taken off his hose and shoes at the edge of a stream on returning from work had sat down on the Saturday evening to wash his extremities. Soon from the bottom of the water in which he was washing, the Devil fastened his feet together. The countryman finding himself caught, cried out to his neighbours for help and was carried to his own house by them, where these men of a rude class used every device to break through the fetters. Struggling in a useless round of efforts, all they try is unavailing. For the spiritual must be dealt with by spiritual means. At length after long and useless striving a stranger joined their company, rushed upon the fettered man in the sight of all of them and in a moment set him free. This being done he quickly departed before anyone could ask who he was. Moreover, there is a plenty of tales told of demons who eagerly seek to gain the love of women and even their embraces, and if I were not ashamed to do so, I could say much on that head. There are some too who are savage in inflicting wicked cruelty and some who are content with mockery only. Now let me turn my pen to more cheerful topics.

CHAPTER XX

IN England, the Most Blessed Martyr, King Edmund, both aforetime and now, has been a great miracle-worker. I say nothing of his body of a colour divine

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and more than human and undecayed until now, the growth of hair and nail on which as though it were a living man, makes us wonder. But there is this to be said, that, great miracle as he is, he suffers himself to be seen by no one. A certain abbot of that church in our time wished to know for himself whether the head that had been cut off at his martyrdom, had been reunited to the body, as was commonly reported, and so after fasting with his chaplain, he uncovered him and saw what I before described, learning perilously by sight and touch that the flesh had nowhere fallen in, and he had all the appearance of a sleeper and one at the head and the other at the foot took off what he wore and found the body firm ; but soon afterwards they were withered by a permanent palsy of both hands.

Still another wonderful tale. The monks in a monastery had reared a little kid. This with the playfulness of its kind wandering here and there about the buildings and even the church, by accident broke its leg. Limping about slowly on three legs the best way it could in its ramblings everywhere, it chanced to enter the church and to make its way to the feretory of the martyr. At once as with a brute's curiosity he came under it, his leg was made whole. What will the good Martyr do when faithfully approached on behalf of human-kind, who thus shews his natural kindness, or, I should better say, his royal benignity, in the case of a beast ?

St. Witon, in the city of Winchester has shewn himself potent in wonders up to the present day. For not long ago a monk who had dreadful ulcers on both hands so that in those members he was worse than any leper, entirely lost the use of them. The saint appearing to him in displeasure at his absence

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from the night services through this and from the general offering of praise inquired why he was absent. Thereupon he gave as his reason the pain and festering of his hands. "Stretch out your hands." said he. He did so and the saint grasped them both and drew off like gloves the whole of the scabby skin and left it smoother than the flesh of a child.

The arm of the Blessed Martyr Arnulf, was kept in the town from which he sprang, and this having been brought into the place by some one, the townspeople became doubtful about it and it was thrown into a fire to test it, but immediately leapt out of it. Some time elapsed and then a young cousin of mine, one of the nobles of the castle was stricken with a very serious disease. The arm of the Blessed Martyr being laid on him, the complaint shifted its ground at the touch and settled in another part. And when its virulence was driven off and the touch of the arm pressed it hard, in the end after running up and down his face and limbs, in the parts near the throat and shoulders, the whole force of the disease found its way out there, the skin being a little raised like a mouse's and gathering into a ball vanished without any pain. Because of this every year on that day he gave a sumptuous banquet to all the clergy present at the feast, as long as he lived, and his descendants do not cease to do so to this very day. And a lady of great skill in worldly matters, not the wife of my ancestor, but a friend, covered the armbone with rich gold and jewels.

Guise is a fortress in this district of Laon, in which also the arm of the Blessed Arnulf is said to be. Some thieves who had plundered the church, wishing to steal this too and laying their hands on it, it wrested itself from their grasp and could not be taken

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anywhere. The thieves being caught with the rest of their booty, confessed this at the time when they were to be carried to the gallows. In the gold with which the arm is adorned, there is a spot where no jewel can be fastened securely by any skill of the gem-setter. For as soon as it was set, it became loose, and when the workman was changed, both the workman and his work were useless.

We are not unaware that the martyr Leodegarius was an eminent miracle-worker and a ready helper in need. For I, when still very little, but clearly remembering this, was living with my mother when at Easter I was violently ill of a quotidian fever. Now close to the town there was a church dedicated to Sts. Leodegarius and Machutus, where my mother in humble faith supplied an oil lamp continually burning. When therefore, I turned against almost every kind of food, summoning two clerics, her chaplain and my schoolmaster, she ordered that I should be taken thither in their care. In accordance with the bad practice of ancient custom that church came under her control. The clerics coming there begged that a bed should be made for her and me before the altar. And, lo, in the middle of the night the ground inside the church began to be beaten as it were with hammers and at times the locks of the chests to be torn off with a loud noise and sometimes the cracking of sticks to be heard above the chests. Now the clerics awaking through the sound, began to be afraid that the fright would make me worse. To be brief, although they muttered low, yet I caught the words, but was only moderately afraid because of their companionship and the comfort of the shining lamp. Thus passing through the night I returned safely to my mother as if I had suffered no incon-

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venience, and I who had turned from the most delicious dishes, now was eager for ordinary food and just as ready for a game of ball.

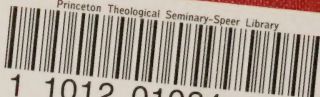
The King of England, William the elder, had a tower built in the church of the mighty Denys (whose dimensions, had it been finished and still standing would have been extremely great). This work not being methodically constructed by the architects, each day seemed more likely to bring about its own downfall. And as Ivo, the Abbot at that time and the monks, were afraid that the fall of the new work might cause the destruction of the older church (for the altar of the Blessed Edmund and of some others were there) the following vision presented itself to the Abbot in his anxiety. He saw a lady of very comely form standing in the midst of the church of the Blessed Denys, who was exorcising water in the manner of a priest. And when the Abbot wondered at the dignity of the woman, he noticed the unusual things which she was doing ; for after the blessing of the water, she sprinkled it here and there, and after the sprinkling she made the sign of the cross all round, wherever she had sprinkled. Suddenly the tower fell, but harmed no part of the church in its fall. For she who is blessed among woman, the fruit of whose womb is blessed, had protected it with the blessing seen in the vision of the Abbot. Falling therefore, it buried a man walking beneath. When it was discovered that the man was buried under all the stones, out of pity they began to remove the pile from him. At last when the mountains of stone and rubble had been taken away, they come to him ; and they find him, wonderful to say, safe and cheerful, as if he had been sitting at home. For the squared stones wedging them-

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selves together in a straight line made for him a little room. Although therefore, he was kept there I do not know how many days, neither hunger, fear nor a very offensive smell of mortar did the imprisoned man any harm.

And now with a prayer to the most excellent Mary patron of heaven and earth, with Denys lord of all France, let me bring my book to an end.

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